

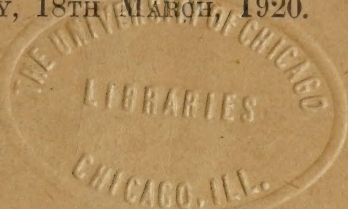
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[ISSUED THURSDAY, 18TH MARCH, 1920.



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

Parliament

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

FIRST SESSION, 1920.

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EIGHTH PARLIAMENT.

FIRST SESSION.

Governor-General.

His Excellency the Right Honorable Sir RONALD CRAUFURD MUNRO FERGUSON, a Member of His Majesty's Most Honorable Privy Council, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, and Commander-in-Chief in and over the Commonwealth of Australia.

Australian National Government.

(From 10th January, 1918.)

Prime Minister and Attorney-General	..	The Right Honorable William Morris Hughes, P.C., K.C.
Minister for the Navy .. ..	..	The Right Honorable Sir Joseph Cook, P.C., G.C.M.G.
Treasurer .. ..	..	The Right Honorable Lord Forrest, P.C., G.C.M.G.
		<i>Succeeded by</i>
Minister for Defence .. ..	..	The Right Honorable William Alexander Watt, P.C. (27th March, 1918).
Minister for Repatriation ..	..	The Honorable George Foster Pearce.
Minister for Works and Railways	..	The Honorable Edward Davis Millen.
		The Right Honorable William Alexander Watt, P.C.
		<i>Succeeded by</i>
Minister for Home and Territories	..	The Honorable Littleton Ernest Groom (27th March, 1918).
		The Honorable Patrick McMahon Glynn, K.C. †††
		<i>Succeeded by</i>
Minister for Trade and Customs	..	The Honorable Alexander Poynton (4th February, 1920).
		The Honorable Jens August Jensen.†
		<i>Succeeded by</i>
		The Right Honorable William Alexander Watt, P.C. (13th December, 1918).
		<i>Succeeded by</i>
Postmaster-General .. ..	..	The Honorable Walter Massy Greene (17th January, 1919).
		The Honorable William Webster. †††
		<i>Succeeded by</i>
Vice-President of the Executive Council	..	The Honorable George Henry Wise (4th February, 1920).
		The Honorable Littleton Ernest Groom.
		<i>Succeeded by</i>
Honorary Minister .. ..	..	The Honorable Edward John Russell.
		The Honorable Edward John Russell.
Honorary Minister .. ..	..	Appointed Vice-President of the Executive Council, 27th March, 1918.
		The Honorable Alexander Poynton.
Honorary Minister .. ..	..	Appointed Minister for Home and Territories, 4th February, 1920.
		The Honorable George Henry Wise.
Honorary Minister .. ..	..	Appointed Postmaster-General, 4th February, 1920.
		The Honorable Walter Massy Greene.
Honorary Minister .. ..	..	Appointed Minister for Trade and Customs, 17th January, 1919.*
		The Honorable Richard Beaumont Orchard**
Honorary Minister .. ..	..	The Honorable Sir Granville de Laune Ryrie, K.C.M.G., C.B., V.D. ††
Honorary Minister .. ..	..	The Honorable William Henry Laird Smith.††

* Appointed 26th March, 1918.—† Removed from office, 13th December, 1918.—** Resigned office, 31st January, 1919.—†† Appointed 4th February, 1920.—††† Resigned 3rd February, 1920.

Senators.

President—Senator the Honorable Thomas Givens.

Chairman of Committees—Senator John Wallace Shannon.

¹ Bakbap, Thomas Jerome Kingston (T.)	Lynch, Hon. Patrick Joseph (W.A.)
Barker, Stephen (V.)	Maughan, William John Ryott (Q.)
Barnes, John (V.)	¹ McDougall, Allan (N.S.W.)
Bolton, William Kinsey (V.)	Millen, Hon. Edward Davis (N.S.W.)
¹ Buzacott, Richard (W.A.)	† Mulcahy, Hon. Edward (T.)
Crawford, Thomas William (Q.)	Needham, Edward (W.A.)
De Largie, Hon. Hugh (W.A.)	¹ Newland, John (S.A.)
Earle, Hon. John (T.)	O'Keefe, Hon. David John (T.)
Fairbairn, George (V.)	O'Loughlin, Hon. James Vincent,
Ferriks, Myles Aloysius (Q.)	V.D. (S.A.)
Foll, Hattil Spencer (Q.)	Pearce, Hon. George Foster (W.A.)
Gardiner, Hon. Albert (N.S.W.)	Plain, William (V.)
Givens, Hon. Thomas (Q.)	Pratten, Herbert Edward (N.S.W.)
Grant, John (N.S.W.)	Reid, Matthew (Q.)
Guthrie, Robert Storrie (S.A.)	Rewell, James, C.B. (S.A.)
Guy, James (T.)	Russell, Hon. Edward John (V.)
Henderson, George (W.A.)	Senior, William (S.A.)
Keating, Hon. John Henry (T.)	Shannon, John Wallace (S.A.)
* Long, Hon. James Joseph (T.)	Thomas, Hon. Josiah (N.S.W.)

1. Appointed Temporary Chairman of Committees, 26th February, 1920.—* Resignation reported, 20th December, 1918.

† Appointed by State Parliament, 15th January, 1919.—Sworn 26th June, 1919, and elected to fill vacancy, 13th December, 1919.

by means of strikes, whereas public servants cannot strike. It is peculiar to hear sections of the press howling economy, while, at the same time, they are every day robbing the public of Victoria by having their newspapers sent to country towns at a great loss to the railways. Then, again, we have commercial men howling economy because parcels and newspapers are not brought over by train from Western Australia, but by sea, because the latter is the cheaper. In my own division, I have a nice lot of old ladies and gentlemen—very estimable citizens, though they are opponents of mine—and they, too, are howling economy; but when the Victorian Government economizes by putting out of commission the boat which ran between Port Melbourne and Williamstown, these ladies and gentlemen howled more than ever. As a matter of fact, both the Government supporters and the Country party advocate economy for “the other fellow.”

Since 1916 Australia has been misled and made a scapegoat of; and the reason we could not get to know what we owed was that the Government did not want the public to know what they were spending. The honorable member for Cook (Mr. Catts) has to-night quoted figures showing that, while the Canadian farmer was receiving 10s. a bushel for his wheat the Australian farmer was receiving only about 4s., and, at the same time, the Canadian workers had hundreds of millions of pounds spent on them in the manufacturing of commodities. Yet we were told by those amongst us who “wave the flag” that Australia was not doing her share, though, as a matter of fact, she was doing more than Canada. If the honorable member for New England (Mr. Hay), as a farmer's representative, is satisfied with what the Government have done in the past, and does not, while a member of this House, condemn the Government if it should continue as hitherto, the farmers of New England will not require him much longer.

I wish to know from the Government supporters and from the members of the Country party whether they are willing to accept, in the near future, another little bill for £47,000,000 of which we know nothing. If those honorable members would exercise some economy in this direction, and not only in the matter

of wages, they would do more good. But, of course, if they did that, they would be only common politicians, whereas they wish to be statesmen who always talk about “the country” and the “flag under which we live.” If they gave more consideration to the people who produce commodities than they do to the “flag” greater benefit would accrue to the community.

Question—That the sum proposed to be reduced be so reduced—put. The Committee divided.

Ayes	30
Noes	34
Majority	4

AYES.

Blakeley, A.	Maloney, Dr.
Brennan, F.	Mathews, J.
Considine, M. P.	McWilliams, W. J.
Cook, Robert	Moloney, Parker
Cunningham, L. L.	Nicholls, S. R.
Fenton, J. E.	Page, Dr. Earle
Gabb, J. M.	Prowse, J. H.
Gibson, W. G.	Ryan, T. J.
Gregory, H.	Stewart, P. G.
Hay, A.	Tudor, F. G.
Hill, W. C.	Watkins, D.
Jowett, E.	West, J. E.
Lavelle, T. J.	
Lazzarini, H. P.	
Mahony, W. G.	
Makin, N. J. O.	

Tellers:

Catts, J. H.
Page, James

NOES.

Atkinson, L.	Jackson, D. S.
Bayley, J. G.	Johnson, W. Elliot
Bell, G. J.	Kerby, E. T. J.
Blundell, R. P.	Lamond, Hector
Bowden, E. K.	Lister, J. H.
Bruce, S. M.	Mackay, G. H.
Cameron, D. C.	Marks, W. M.
Chapman, Austin	Marr, C. W. C.
Cook, Sir Joseph	Maxwell, G. A.
Corser, E. B. C.	Rodgers, A. S.
Fleming, W. M.	Ryrie, Sir Granville
Foster, Richard	Smith, Laird
Fowler, J. M.	Wienholt, A.
Francis, F. H.	Wise, G. H.
Greene, W. M.	
Groom, L. E.	
Higgs, W. G.	
Hughes, W. M.	

Tellers:

Burchell, R. J.
Story, W. H.

PAIRS.

Charlton, M.	Livingston, J.
Anstey, F.	Watt, W. A.
Mahon, H.	Bamford, F. W.
McDonald, C.	Best, Sir Robert
Riley, E.	Poynton, A.

Question so resolved in the negative.

Amendment negatived.

Original question resolved in the affirmative.

Resolution reported and adopted.

Resolution of Ways and Means, covering resolution of Supply, adopted.

Ordered—

That Mr. Hughes and Sir Joseph Cook do prepare and bring in a Bill to carry out the foregoing resolution.

Bill presented by Mr. HUGHES, and read a first time.

Motion (by Mr. HUGHES) proposed—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. TUDOR (Yarra) [11.9].—Although there has been a lot of discussion upon the amendment moved by the honorable member for Franklin (Mr. McWilliams), there has been no discussion upon the Bill itself. I know that it was the intention of some honorable members to move amendments to the Bill. Do the Government propose to endeavour to pass the Bill through all its stages to-night, or will they be content if the Bill passes to-morrow before the departure of the Inter-State trains?

Mr. HUGHES (Bendigo—Prime Minister and Attorney-General) [11.10].—The Bill is for the purpose of enabling the Government to meet expenditure necessary to carry on the Public Service of the country, and it is essential that it be passed this evening in order that the Senate may have an opportunity of dealing with it to-morrow.

Mr. TUDOR.—Does that mean that we shall have to sit all night?

Mr. HUGHES.—I hope not. I have no information on the matter at all. The honorable gentleman has asked me a question, and I have given him my answer.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee:

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2 (Issue and application of £5,727,180),

Mr. FENTON (Maribyrnong) [11.13].—There is not the slightest hope of the Bill being passed before midnight, as several items have to be discussed, and therefore I am prepared to sit longer. Quite a number of items to which I object are included in the schedule of the Bill. There is, for instance, the proposed further expenditure on the Bureau of Science and Industry. We have not yet passed the Bill authorizing the establishment of that institute, and yet the Government propose to spend more money

in connexion with it. There is also the expenditure for the Commonwealth Police Force, which was established at the whim of the Prime Minister. There are quite a number of other items which, in my opinion, should be dealt with in detail. There has been a very fair amount of discussion upon various aspects of the Supply Bill, but, so far, honorable members have had no opportunity of dealing with particular items. Some honorable members purposely refrained from occupying the time allowed under the Standing Orders on the original motion, and now we are expected to pass the Bill *in globo* granting Supply for three months, and authorizing a total expenditure of nearly £6,000,000. If there is one thing that needs to be discussed, it is the financial position of this country. In the Postal Department alone, the accumulated grievances would take a considerable amount of time to place before the new Postmaster-General, in order that some redress might be obtained. We have had a speech in general terms from the Treasurer (Mr. Watt), but no information with respect to some of the most important items in the Bill. The report of the Auditor-General discloses an unfortunate state of affairs. Certain matters referred to by him can only be elucidated in a detailed discussion on this Supply Bill. It seems, however, that, notwithstanding the protest made by honorable members of the Corner party, we are going to be subjected to the same treatment that has been meted out to us during the last five years; but if there is any substance at all in our protest—I am referring now to the thirty honorable members who voted against the Government in the division that has just been taken—it is about time we gave evidence of it.

Mr. MAXWELL.—Can you give us some idea of the items you want to discuss?

Mr. FENTON.—There is the proposal to spend £3,000 in connexion with the Bureau of Science and Industry. The Prime Minister has not yet taken honorable members into his confidence as to the future of that Bureau, although a considerable sum of money has already been spent upon it. It is about time that some concrete proposals were submitted to this Committee. If, however, honorable members are going to remain silent while

millions of pounds are voted away, all that I can say is that if I were the editor of one of our metropolitan journals, I would certainly comment caustically upon the insincerity of honorable members of this House who, while protesting against the action of the Government, failed when they had an opportunity of insisting upon a scrutiny of the finances. The Treasurer has gone. I presume we shall not see him again in this chamber for some time. I have no doubt he is smiling at the thought of having indulged in an admirable piece of bluff, and at having left the Prime Minister to bluff honorable members a little further; because honorable members appear ready to take the lash whenever the Prime Minister cares to administer it. It is time that not only was a partial protest made by one section, or by two sections of the House, but that such honorable members as the honorable member for Wakefield (Mr. Richard Foster) and others who have been loud-mouthed in their protests during the course of this debate should demonstrate the genuineness of their criticisms. It is up to them to vigorously challenge various items contained in the schedule. If they let this opportunity slip through their fingers the Government will naturally and readily turn round and say, "We have a meek and humble and contented set of followers."

The CHAIRMAN (Hon. J. M. Chanter).—Order! The honorable member is going right outside of the clause altogether.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—He has never been in it.

Mr. FENTON.—It appears to me, sir, that one can discuss almost anything under the sun when addressing himself to this clause.

The CHAIRMAN.—The honorable member will have ample opportunity at the proper time to discuss the various items contained in the schedule; but the opportunity is not afforded at present.

Mr. FENTON.—I do not wish to fall foul of you, sir, so early in the history of this Parliament, but I beg to disagree.

The CHAIRMAN.—Order! Will the honorable member resume his seat.

Mr. BRENNAN.—I see before me all the elements of an intolerable tyranny.

The CHAIRMAN.—I ask the honorable member for Batman to be silent when

the Chairman is standing. The Chair has no desire to limit honorable members' rights or privileges, but the honorable member for Maribyrnong ought to be well acquainted with the forms controlling discussion in Committee. This clause is for a specific purpose, and the honorable member may deal with that purpose, and with that only. He will have his opportunities to refer to other matters when the Committee is engaged upon the various items contained in the schedule. I ask him, therefore, to restrict his remarks at this present stage.

Mr. FENTON.—I am aware that if I wished to challenge any item, I would be compelled to wait until it came before the Committee in the ordinary course of consideration of the schedule. Nevertheless, it appears to me that clause 2, which sets out the specific sum desired to be issued and applied, is sufficiently wide to cover all that I have hitherto said or propose to say.

Mr. MATHEWS.—You were doing good work. That is why you were stopped.

The CHAIRMAN.—Order! I ask the honorable member for Melbourne Ports to withdraw that statement; it is a reflection upon the Chair.

Mr. MATHEWS.—I withdraw it.

The CHAIRMAN.—And I ask him not to repeat it.

Mr. MATHEWS.—That is a direct threat.

Mr. FENTON.—This clause appears to invite discussion of a general character. The first intimation that I had that the Government intended to put the Bill through followed upon the division just taken. I had felt sure that, the fate of the Government having been decided in its favour, the Prime Minister would naturally look for a little respite. It appears, however, that he intends to force an all-night sitting.

Mr. HUGHES.—If the honorable member can tell me, speaking as one human being to another, how this measure is to be put though both Houses by to-morrow, he will be free to go home now.

Mr. TUDOR.—I point out that the Government will not require to have this measure passed through the Senate to-morrow. They have until Thursday next at least to deal with it. There is no need to pay before Friday next one penny of the amount set out in the Bill. The Treasury officials will confirm that.

Mr. FENTON.—I think that is a fair proposition.

Mr. HUGHES.—I do not know whether it is fair or not; but it is very late, and the remarks of the honorable member for Maribyrnong have carried the conviction to my soul, and I can see that if he intends to proceed in the way he has started we shall be here a long time. If I am given an understanding, however, that we shall get through the Bill by 4 o'clock to-morrow afternoon I will be prepared to adjourn now.

Mr. TUDOR.—We will agree to that. Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.30 p.m.

Senate.

Friday, 12 March, 1920.

The PRESIDENT (Senator the Hon. T. Givens) took the chair at 11 a.m., and read prayers.

TRANSPORT FRIEDRICHSRUHE.

Senator EARLE.—I ask the Minister for Defence, first, whether his attention has been directed to the press reports regarding the very unsatisfactory conditions which obtain on board the transport *Friedrichsrue*; and, secondly, whether he will cause an inquiry to be held with the object of punishing those who are responsible for those conditions if such reports prove true?

Senator PEARCE.—My attention was directed to this matter in the first place by a report from our complaints officer at Fremantle. Subsequently, I read the press reports dealing with it. But immediately upon receiving the report of the complaints officer at Fremantle I instructed that upon the arrival of the vessel in Melbourne an inquiry should be held by a senior and reliable officer. My reason for doing this is that a Court of Inquiry usually takes such a long time to investigate complaints, and by the time it has completed its labours it is too late to do anything effective. We have had experience of that sort of thing several times. I have, therefore, adopted the course which I have outlined, so as to insure immediate action.

PAPERS.

The following papers were presented:—

Defence Act 1903-1918.—Regulations amended.
—Statutory Rules 1920, No. 33, No. 34, No. 35.

Excise Act.—Regulations amended.—Statutory Rules 1920; No. 32.

Postmaster-General's Department: Ninth Annual Report, 1918-1919.

War Service Homes Act.—Land acquired for War Service Homes purposes at Bankstown, New South Wales (two notifications).

THE LATE SIR EDMUND BARTON.

The PRESIDENT (Senator the Hon. T. Givens).—I have to announce to the Senate that I have received a letter from Lady Barton, conveying the heartfelt thanks and deep appreciation of herself and family for the action of the Senate in passing a motion of condolence with them upon the occasion of the death of the late Sir Edmund Barton. The reply will be embodied in the records of the Senate.

CYCLONE IN QUEENSLAND.

RELIEF FOR SUFFERERS.

Senator FOLL asked the Minister representing the Prime Minister, *upon notice*—

1. Is it the intention of the Federal Government to grant relief to sufferers from the recent cyclone in North Queensland on the same basis as was granted at the time of the cyclones two years ago?

2. Will the Government consider the advisability of ear-marking a sum on the Estimates each year to provide for losses from cyclones?

Senator MILLEN.—The answer to the honorable senator's question is as follows:—

It is regretted that the state of Federal finance makes it impossible for the Commonwealth Government to grant relief to producers suffering from the effects of cyclones. In any case, to give relief to those who suffered from cyclones without relieving those who suffered very heavily from the disastrous drought would be undesirable and inequitable.

ELECTORAL.

RECOUNT OF VOTES ON PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION PRINCIPLE.

Senator PRATTEN asked the Minister representing the Minister for Home and Territories, *upon notice*—

In view of the possibility of further consideration being given to electoral and other reforms for the Senate, will the Government give instructions for the re-counting of the votes cast for this Chamber at the last election upon the proportional representation principle in order

to furnish an object lesson for the guidance of Parliament in considering the question?

Senator RUSSELL.—The answer to the honorable senator's question reads—

It is a legal requirement that at the conclusion of the scrutiny all ballot-papers used in a Senate election shall be sealed up by each Divisional Returning Officer concerned, and held by him in safe custody pending their ultimate destruction by direction of the Chief Electoral Officer, acting under the authority of the law.

The parcels containing ballot-papers cannot lawfully be opened after the declaration of the poll except by an order of the Court of Disputed Returns in connexion with proceedings before the Court.

NAVIGATION ACT.

Senator BARNES (for Senator MAUGHAN) asked the Minister representing the Minister for Trade and Customs, *upon notice*—

1. How many clauses of the Navigation Act have been proclaimed?

2. How many, if any, of the said clauses have been suspended?

3. How much of the Act is now actually in operation?

Senator RUSSELL.—The answer to the honorable senator's question is as follows:—

Fifty-two clauses and two schedules were proclaimed to come into operation from the 2nd March, 1920. It has been decided to further postpone the operation of the fifty-two clauses and two schedules. No portion of the Act is now actually in operation.

NORTHERN TERRITORY.

DR. GILRUTH'S TERM OF OFFICE.

Senator BARNES (for Senator FERRICKS) asked the Minister representing the Minister for Home and Territories, *upon notice*—

What was the date of the expiration of Dr. Gilruth's term of office as Administrator of the Northern Territory?

Senator RUSSELL.—The answer to the honorable senator's question is—

30th November, 1919.

INVALID AND OLD-AGE PENSIONS ACT.

APPLICATION TO NATIVES OF BRITISH INDIA.

Senator BAKHAP asked the Minister representing the Prime Minister, *upon notice*—

Has the Government yet considered the matter of extending to the natives of British India residing in the Commonwealth who possess the

necessary qualifications, the benefits of the Invalid and Old-age Pensions Acts, by passing the amendment of existing legislation necessary to this being effected?

Senator MILLEN.—The answer to the honorable senator's question is as follows:—

The matter is now under consideration.

AUSTRALIAN SOLDIERS' REPATRIATION BILL.

Motion (by Senator MILLEN) agreed to—

That leave be given to introduce a Bill for an Act to make provision for the repatriation of Australian soldiers and for other purposes.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S SPEECH: ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Debate resumed from 3rd March (*vide* page 108), on motion by Senator LYNCH—

That the following Address-in-Reply be agreed to:—

To His Excellency the Governor-General.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY:

We, the Senate of the Commonwealth of Australia, in Parliament assembled, desire to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech which you have been pleased to address to Parliament.

Senator FAIRBAIRN (Victoria)

[11.8].—It is not my intention to offer any apology for making a few remarks upon the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply, although I have often noticed that the view is entertained by the press and the public that any such discussion is merely a waste of time. I hold that if honorable senators make comments upon the Government programme before it has been crystallized into Bills, a saving of time will be effected, because, as Senator Millen remarked the other day, when once a measure has been submitted for our consideration it is very difficult to alter it. I contend, therefore, that if Ministers are previously informed of the direction which criticism of their programme is likely to take, that knowledge is calculated to expedite the transaction of public business. In addition, it is only reasonable to assume that there is some intelligence to be found, even amongst the rank and file of this Chamber, and suggestions of value to the country and the Ministry may easily be forthcoming from private members.

I congratulate you, sir, upon your return here after a most arduous campaign, with a six-years' tenure ahead of you. At the same time, I am very sorry that we are about to lose some of our friends opposite. Although I differ from them on political questions, I am of opinion that we have a very good Opposition here. I shall be especially sorry to part from my honorable friend Senator Grant, who has so consistently put forward advanced ideas on land questions, but has done so in such a kindly way that nobody could take offence. How the Opposition will carry on in this Chamber after 30th June next it is difficult to say.

We all recognise what a power of strength Senator Gardiner is, and we have a lively recollection of the occasion upon which he spoke for some eleven hours at a stretch. The only thing to which I take exception in that honorable senator's remarks upon the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply, is the tone of his repeated references to Bolshevism. He regards Bolshevism merely as the rule of the majority. But the very first thing that the Bolsheviks did when they attained power was to disband the Russian Parliament, which represented a majority of the Russian people. In my opinion, it is just as bad to have an autocracy of the proletariat as it is to have an autocracy of the Czar and of the aristocracy. From what I have been able to gather, the atrocities which have been committed under the rule of Bolshevism, during the past few years, have been far greater than those committed under the rule of Czardom during centuries. In Australia we do not want that class of rule. We desire democratic rule. As bearing upon this question, I will read certain statements by Maxim Gorky, the famous Russian author. In a recent magazine article, he says—

The revolution and Bolshevik rule in Russia has not been followed by intellectual regeneration. The new rulers are as brutal as their predecessors, and Bolshevik rule means the vivisection of human beings and great workers.

Senator ROWELL.—According to the cables in this morning's newspapers, the Bolsheviks are killing all the professors there.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—Yes. How they are going to educate the people I do not

know. In Australia, however, we have an educated people, and, in my opinion, they will never contemplate a return to an autocracy, either of the aristocracy or of the proletariat.

I am still of opinion that it is something in the nature of an anomaly, that we should have practically the same franchise for this Senate as obtains for the other branch of the Legislature. In such circumstances it is difficult to explain to the people, why there should be two Houses of this Parliament. I note that our Labour friends wish to abolish the Senate—

Senator NEWLAND.—And all the State Parliaments as well.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—I do not think that that idea will ever catch on with the people. I have the temerity to suggest that the franchise for the Senate ought to be somewhat different from that of the House of Representatives. Particularly is this necessary in Victoria, where two Parliaments meet, and where the feeling is growing that our parliamentary expenditure must be reduced. The suggestion I desire to make not be favorably considered by the Conservative section of the community, but I think it is one that will be generally acceptable in a democratic country. One of the planks in the platform of the Labour party is a reduction in the age of voters, both male and female, to eighteen, and my suggestion is that children should be allowed a vote through their parents, which, in effect, is merely carrying out the principle advocated by the Labour party. I do not suggest that every child should be entitled to a vote, but that parents supporting families should each be entitled to an extra vote. Such a provision in our electoral system would have a very steadying effect. I believe that the people of Australia generally regard the bi-cameral system favorably, and this is supported by the decision of the people in Queensland, when a referendum was taken on the abolition of the Upper House in that State.

Senator REID.—There is no chance of abolishing it now.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—No. I am surprised that Labour people in a democratic State such as Queensland have not taken steps in the direction I have suggested by providing that married people maintaining children should be entitled to

extra voting power. I am indebted to Senator Keating for courteously translating from the French journal *La Petit Parisien*, the report of a debate in the French Chamber on this question. When the first vote was taken, 200 out of 419 supported the proposal, and probably the next time it is submitted it will be passed. In Belgium the principle has been recognised to some extent, and I believe that if its provisions were clearly placed before the electors of Australia it would be universally supported. M. Landry, who brought this matter forward, said—

Children electors! Is it a joke? What! The newly born to take part in the ballots! Exactly. Have they not civil rights? Can they not own, inherit, sell? Why have they not political rights? Why should they not take part under the same conditions as other members of the nation in the making of the laws to which they are subject?

Of course, there is no question of making children vote in person. For the exercise of political rights recognised in them, just as for the exercise of their civil rights, they would be represented by the father, mother, or guardian.

Senator ROWELL.—But there the women have not the franchise.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—Perhaps not. My idea would be to give the mother and father of children each an extra vote.

Senator EARLE.—Not an extra vote for each child?

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—No. I think it would be difficult to differentiate in that way. The report continues—

But then, it will be asked, a single elector, such as the father of a family, will be able to use several suffrages? Undoubtedly; it is then a system of plural voting? Not at all. One may speak of plural voting when a citizen is seen casting two or several votes by reason of his fortune or his education. The plural vote is the negation of the principle of equality, which is at the root of our democratic institutions. The family vote, which gives the suffrage to every French person of whatever sex or age is essentially equality. It actualizes that universal suffrage which we think we have, but which we are very far from possessing.

That children represented by those who have the charge of their upbringing should participate in electoral matters is by no means an absurdity. There is nothing in it out of accord with the fundamental principles which govern the society in which we live. The family vote flows from those principles if one chooses to properly understand them. It might even be said that the rights of children in society should be, in one sense, regarded as superior to those of adults. The child having before him the whole of a long career to tra-

verse, is he not interested in the proper procedure of public affairs more than is the old man approaching the decline of his days; and who to-morrow will descend to the tomb? Is he not, if one may so say it, a more important element in the nation?

It remains to regard the political problems from the point of view of the philosopher. But when one has to pronounce upon a reform, it is, above all, its practical consequences that should be regarded. The institution of the family vote, it seems, could have none but good.

The elected to-day hold their commission from an electoral body composed, for the greater part of celibates, or of men who have not given to France the number of children necessary for its endurance. It is amongst such classes of citizens that one has the least chance of seeing predominate care for the permanent interests of the homeland (*patrie*). Citizens, on the contrary, who have charge of a large family will be disposed to think of the future of the country, upon which depends that of their children. Can any one hold any doubt on this point? What will not be debated, at least, is that, with the family vote, questions interesting families will be treated by the public powers in a spirit quite different from that which prevails at present. In this order of ideas, what trouble has there not been, even to this day, to get from Parliament and the Administration measures only too modest, which have but feebly redressed the injustices overwhelming families.

That is the case here, even in a more pronounced degree than in France.

Senator MILLEN.—I understand the honorable senator's argument rests upon the presence and rights of children. It does not depend upon the occurrence of marriage.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—That is so. It would be difficult to arrange as to how many children should carry a vote. If the Minister for Repatriation has any suggestions to offer in this connexion, they will be very welcome. The report goes on—

When the family vote assures them preponderance in electoral matters, they will have, without any trouble, the redress and the consideration to which they are compelled to lay claim. And a superior dignity conferred upon the heads of numerous families will do more than all else to upset detestable prejudice which exists in France against fecundity.

Let us remember that it is the stationary condition of our population which, giving our enemies numerical superiority, encouraged them to let loose war. Let us reflect that this war will have lost France, since 1914, as well by the deaths it has caused as by the decline of births, which will result, more than 3,000,000 inhabitants before the end of this year. Our country rushes to ruin and to destruction if we do not destroy the canker which eats into it. Against that canker the

family vote is the most efficacious remedy, as well by its direct consequences as also in providing means of obtaining measures to which recourse is equally necessary. Is public opinion insufficiently prepared to welcome this reform? Better enlightened, it will understand soon how it is necessary, and also how important it is to the very safety of France.

In Australia we are experiencing many of the difficulties that are now confronting France, and more particularly in the matter of a declining birth-rate. During the war 60,000 of our best men lost their lives, and it should be our duty and desire to facilitate marriage, and thus increase the number of our native-born. We should also give more consideration to married people, who have greater responsibilities than single ones.

Senator BAKHAP.—Married people have all the money.

Senator FAIRBAIRN. — Well, the single ones must spend it.

Senator BAKHAP.—Union is strength, and married couples have more resources than single people.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—The honorable senator must have "gone the pace" before he was married.

Senator BAKHAP.—If I did, I had many comrades.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—Under existing legislation, the basic wage paid to a married man is the same as that paid to a single workman, who may not have any dependants. If we are to continue asking our virile male population to marry, greater consideration in the matter of wages will have to be shown them if they follow our advice. Under existing conditions, a single man is paid as much as a married man who has to support a wife and three children, and that is certainly a most extraordinary anomaly. It has been said that if the single man is paid a lower rate than the married worker, a section of employers would engage the cheaper class of labour, to the detriment of the married. Whether that would be the case or not, I cannot say, but such an assertion has been made. I cannot understand how married people can be more affluent than single ones, as Senator Bakhap has suggested. It should be the endeavour of the Government to place every facility in the way of people desiring to marry, so that we can have a large increase in our native-born population, which, after all, is our best national asset.

I have brought this matter forward for the consideration of the Government, and trust that something in the direction I have indicated will be done at an early date. It is an anomaly to have two Houses elected practically on the same franchise, and if our electoral law were amended somewhat on the lines I have indicated, it might have a steadying effect, and be in the true interests of the welfare of the Commonwealth.

May I refer briefly to the question of finance. The Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) has stated that the finances of the country are to be fully investigated. Very shortly we shall have a Supply Bill before us, when we trust the Government will give us every opportunity of dealing most carefully with all its provisions. The Estimates of Expenditure for the next financial year will demand close and wise consideration. In the Prime Minister's speech to the electors, he stated—

A huge burden of debt rests upon us, and it will require all the prudence and caution of high statesmanship to deal with the problem. Until the gradual liquidation of our war indebtedness, production and industry must sustain heavy imposts. The Government stresses the great and growing importance of finance, and asks the cheerful co-operation of the people in its treatment of the problem.

It is indeed a problem when we remember that Australia with its handful of people owes now £718,322,726. Although a great deal of that is State debt, the Commonwealth I suppose owes quite £350,000,000, and before very long, with the money required to settle our soldiers and for the gratuity, it will be something like £400,000,000. That in itself makes one think that we ought to handle our financial affairs in as economical a way as we can. A Commission appointed by the Government, and called the Economics Commission, has made a great many valuable suggestions. Senator Lynch said that its suggestions were too vague, but it should be remembered that its members could not possibly go into the whole of the details at the time at their disposal. Being business men, they selected several men from the Government Service to assist them in going into the details. These were Mr. Templeton, Mr. Lawson, Mr. Broad, and Mr. Griffiths. They have been into the various details very thoroughly, and are making various recommendations. If

the Commission has not the time to carry out its suggestions, a Committee ought to be appointed for the purpose. In this report we have concrete suggestions for economy with efficiency, and I think the Government are dealing with some of them now. I should like to see the Commission given power to continue and to see that effect is given to its recommendations, because Ministers in charge of Departments have an enormous amount of work to do, and would welcome a body of that sort. I understand that the suggestions made in the Commission's report mean a saving of about £3,000,000 a year. That is always something, although we are becoming used to talking in millions. I remember how the late Lord Forrest staggered everybody with his celebrated question, "What is a million?" Nowadays a million is nothing. We go in for a loan of forty odd million pounds. I would direct special attention to the following statement in the report regarding the record and correspondence work of the mail branch of the Sydney General Post Office:—

Paper work, involving, in many instances, voluminous reports and returns, and further reports and returns, is an absolute disease in the General Post Office, Sydney.

That I take to be a dangerous disease which needs to be checked at once. I should like the Postmaster-General (Mr. Wise) to appoint a small Committee, preferably of business men, to help him to go into this matter. His is one of the great spending Departments, although fortunately of late it has produced more revenue than it has spent, but if we are going to be liberal to the country districts, as I hope we are, we shall have to spend more money in that direction, so that we shall soon have a deficit again on the operations of the Department, if care is not taken. The report continues—

If an officer had set out with the deliberate intention of creating unnecessary work and positions for employees of the Service, he could not have devised a system more in keeping with such ideas than the system now in operation. I am perfectly satisfied that no business institution could possibly maintain such a grotesquely absurd system without having at an early date to seek refuge in the Bankruptcy Court.

That is by no means the sort of refuge that we want to seek. The passage I have quoted is a tremendously strong indictment, and I should like to know from

the Postmaster-General whether the gentleman who devised that system still remains in the Post Office. He should certainly have been found something else to do by now. I hope that in these directions the promises of the Government are going to bear fruit.

Naturally during the war it was impossible to look into these details, and we sympathized with Ministers. They fell into ill-health from the vast amount of work they had to do, as it was. As the Prime Minister put it, "A Democracy is not a good machine for a war," so he had to become an autocrat, which was rather a congenial occupation for him. At any rate, he did it very well. We are proud of the way in which he carried things through in many directions; but now we want to get back to our old parliamentary system. We want to scrutinize the Estimates, and I feel sure the Ministry are going to give us an opportunity to do so. I shall be glad if we could induce the Leader of the Senate (Senator Millen) to "name the day," although that is always difficult, so that we may go through our Estimates in a really intelligent way. Even though the money is spent, we may make suggestions to Ministers to prevent much of the expenditure recurring next year. I suppose Senator Millen is not yet in a position to name the actual day, but no doubt it will be before long. Last session we dealt with the Estimates for about two hours, and then the money was pretty well all spent, so that our suggestions for economy were perfectly futile. We wish to get back now to our old system. Parliament must have charge of the finances, and we must set about curtailing our expenditure so that we may carry on without undue suffering to the whole community.

Senator GUTHRIE.—We rather want to find means to increase our income.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—That is a very difficult thing to do, with a drought upon us. Seven million sheep have actually died in New South Wales up to the end of last year, and about 3,000,000 have gone since, so that, I am sorry to say, our production is bound to fall off.

An inquiry is now being conducted into the question of the basic wage. The Commission, as it is now formed, is not on right lines. Mr. Justice Higgins

asked for a thorough and expert inquiry into the basic wage. We have now a Commission, with Mr. Piddington as chairman, appointed by the Government, three members appointed by the employers' bodies, that is, the Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber of Manufactures, and the Employers' Federations all over Australia, and three members appointed by the industrial unions. We predicted, and our prediction is coming true, that it would become a debating society.

Senator DE LARGIE.—It is a great deal worse.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—Yes; I am afraid it is inflaming the passions of both employers and employees—the very thing which we are trying to avoid.

Senator MILLEN.—It is mighty near a competition in romance.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—Yes. The employees are bringing forward what they would like to have; but they do not regard the possibilities of the case. I suppose all honorable senators saw that extraordinary list of necessities published in the press on the 27th of last month. It comes to £4 0s. 9d. per week for food alone. I understand that there is also nearly £1 a week for housing, and over £2 a week for clothes. We have made it up and find that the basic wage, according to our Labour friends, actually comes to nearly £10 a week. The present basic wage is, I think, between £3 and £4. An increase to £10 would be absolutely impossible for Australia to contemplate.

Senator GUTHRIE.—What has been the basic wage of the squatter?

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—We are not dealing with that question. Many of the squatters have had no basic wage at all.

Senator GUTHRIE.—They have been in clover.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—I can assure the honorable senator that many of the squatters in New South Wales are at present in a state of insolvency. That is a very unkind remark for my honorable friend to make. I have heard many sneers from him before on this question.

Senator FOLL.—Some Queensland squatters are not very flourishing.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—No; and some of the New South Wales men are actually perishing. I have lent men bags

of flour to carry on with many a time before now. I quite concur with Senator Guthrie that if we could give our workers £10 a week, we should do so. I should be most delighted to do it. The employers want to approach this matter in a humanitarian way, and give the employees the best possible wage and the best surroundings, so that they can rear their families in ease and comfort; but we certainly cannot pay a wage of £10 a week. It was shown at the Commission which sat recently in New South Wales that an increase of only 1s. a week meant no less than £2,500,000 a year to the workers of Australia. An increase of the basic wage from its present figure up to £10 a week would mean no less than £350,000,000. The total production of Australia, including manufactures and agricultural and pastoral products, is worth only £283,000,000. A proposition of that sort, therefore, reduces itself to an impossibility.

Senator GUTHRIE.—Yet £2,250,000 of excess war-time profits were taken by the Government.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—That was for two years. Canada, which was in a fortunate position, collected no less than £15,000,000 every year; but Canada's income tax amounts to only £2,000,000 a year, whereas the State and Federal income taxes in Australia total £13,000,000 a year. The extra war-time profits tax came from money made by some people in excess of what they made before the war. I was amazed that the amount was so small. It is plain that certain individuals made more during the war than they did before; and it was quite right that they should pay a war-time profits tax of 50 per cent. for the first year, and 75 per cent. in the second and third years. I have no objection to that. They made extra profits, and did not want to bleed the country in time of war. I do not think anybody grumbled very much about the tax, although there have been some strange cases of hardship under it.

Mr. William Brooks, M.L.C., of Sydney, who was on the Committee appointed by the New South Wales Legislative Council to inquire into the Maintenance of Children Bill, showed that the average number of children to married workers was 1.8, with an average of 1.2 for adult

male workers. Forty per cent. of the workers were unmarried, and 20 per cent. of the married workers had no dependent children. Therefore, in fixing the basic wage for the needs of a family of three dependent children, they were providing for two children who did not exist. That is our theoretical objection to the fixing of a basic wage for a man, his wife, and three children. Mr. Brooks stated further—

Every shilling increase per week on the basic wage meant £2,500,000 per annum, and that showed the necessity for full information. The Chairman of the Commission (Mr. Piddington) had laid it down that he would take evidence as to the actual cost of living of any class covered by the Arbitration Act.

There is another matter we object to. The Prime Minister's original instructions were that the Commission should not deal with any but the lowest class of labour. The intention was to ascertain how much would keep a man, his wife, and three children in decency and comfort, but Mr. Piddington intends to inquire into every class of labour that is represented before the Commission. This will prolong the inquiry to a very great extent, and cost an enormous sum of money. I do not know how our labour friends are standing the strain, but the employers are feeling it keenly, and it is likely the inquiry will go on for twelve months at least.

Senator DE LARGIE.—It would not matter if we obtained a decent report.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—That is so, but the constitution of the Commission, with representatives of the employees on one side making heavy demands, and employers on the other side endeavouring to keep the amounts down, seems to preclude any hope in that direction. I have no hesitation in saying that, speaking generally, the employers wish to deal with employees in a humanitarian manner, and in connexion with this inquiry we want the truth, and not grotesque statements such as have been brought before the Commission.

Senator CRAWFORD.—If the inquiry lasts for twelve months, much of the information will be out-of-date.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—That is so, because probably the prices of commodities will have risen to such an extent. My greatest objection is to the constitution of the Commission. What was wanted was a man like the present Chair-

man, assisted by Mr. Knibbs and another statistician. There would not then be any friction between representatives of the employers and employees. It is the wish of the Arbitration Court that the basic wage be fixed, because this would save a lot of the time now occupied in hearing complaints. The Court could then fix a higher remuneration for skilled or dangerous employment.

Senator BARNES.—Is that not what Mr. Justice Higgins has asked for?

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—Yes, I have already said so. Mr. Justice Higgins has asked for an expert committee—not a committee composed of employers and employees—to determine this important matter. And this is what the Prime Minister promised during his electioneering campaign. He said—

We have long ago adopted in Australia the principle of compulsory arbitration for the settlement of industrial disputes and of the minimum wage. When I speak of the minimum wage, I speak, of course, only of a living wage—a wage for unskilled and light labour, upon which is to be superimposed extra remuneration for skill and the arduous nature of the work.

Mr. Piddington does not realize the trouble that is ahead of him. We were told that the Commission would last for about six weeks, but the inquiry has been proceeding for over three months now, and the Commission is not half way through the Victorian evidence, so it is quite likely that the inquiry will take fully twelve months. I hope that some good will come out of the inquiry. As employers, we are doing the best we can to carry on, but we have a lot of trouble to find the money and get the evidence together, pay counsel, and meet other expenditure not covered by the amount provided by the Government.

I trust that the Government will bring down some well-thought-out scheme to improve the procedure in the Arbitration Court, because we are pledged to the system of compulsory arbitration, though often I wonder if people understand what it means.

Senator GUTHRIE.—The Commonwealth Arbitration Court can only deal with inter-State disputes.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—But nearly every dispute of late has become inter-State in character. It is important that we should clearly define the functions of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court in relation to the State tribunals, and I

trust that some good will come out of the proposed Convention on the amendment of the Constitution. At present there is very serious overlapping and consequent friction. When the last shearers' award was made by Mr. Justice Higgins the shearers in Queensland immediately approached the State Court, and obtained a variation of the award. This procedure is quite ridiculous. There should be but one authority. We must endeavour to get rid of all this industrial disturbance that is retarding our progress. We cannot have compulsory arbitration and the strike weapon too. Any amendment of the Act should I think, provide for the adequate punishment of industrial crime, because it is a crime to inflict the terrible hardships of a strike upon innocent people. Senator Bakhap pointed out the other day that the recent dispute with the marine engineers was disastrous in its effects upon the people of Tasmania. We do not, of course, want to put men in gaol for striking, but in the amendment of our arbitration law we should, I think, provide a penalty for any breach of that law in just the same way as penalties are imposed for breaches of other laws.

Senator DE LARGIE.—It should be a crime for any body of workers to strike if striking means the stoppage of our food supplies.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—One of the most hideous crimes any body of men could commit is to aim at starving people.

Senator BARNES.—Sometimes you have to starve a lot of people before you can get them to strike.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—No doubt the honorable senator is right if he has in mind what has happened in the past, but I am sure he will agree that if we can establish our Arbitration Court on reasonable lines, there ought to be no excuse for striking, and its findings ought to be obeyed.

Senator BARNES.—I agree with you.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—Arbitration is the only civilized means of settling disputes. One of the principal objections of employees to arbitration is that it takes such a long time to get to the Court. That, of course, is a valid objection, and we should endeavour to save time by determining what is a reasonable basic wage, and the Court, I think, should

have power to delegate all disputes of minor importance to a board.

Senator BARNES.—How would you get over the difficulty created by increased prices following the fixing of an award.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—I cannot at present say how this movement of things in a vicious circle can be overcome. I deplore as much as anybody else in the community the continual rise in the price of commodities. I think it is due to some extent to the importation of goods from other countries where the demand is so keen, but I hope that we have reached the limit.

Senator DE LARGIE.—Our foodstuffs are not imported, and the producers are the poorest paid people in the community.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—In the case of our foodstuffs the world's parity operates. Prices in other countries being so high, local prices rise in sympathy; but fortunately we are better off in Australia than in any other part of the world. For the future working of our Arbitration Court I would like to see three Judges appointed with power to delegate certain of their work to boards, with an understanding that disputes be inquired into within a stipulated time. The worker naturally resents being kept hanging about for a long period before he can get to the Court, as is the case to-day.

Senator BARNES.—It would pay us to appoint twenty Judges if they could keep matters going.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—The appointment of three Judges would be sufficient if the basis which I have suggested were adopted. Either party should have the right to refer a dispute to a board, which could be very rapidly created, and consist of one Judge and two experts. Thus a great deal of time could be saved. We should not take away the right to strike altogether. We know that we cannot compel an employer to keep going if to carry on will involve his ruin; and neither can we compel a workman to give his labour if he cannot live upon the wage paid to him. There must be retained the right to strike; but it should be surrounded by precautions. There should be no strike or lock-out permitted except by consent of the Registrar of the Court, and only after a secret ballot conducted by the Government.

Senator SENIOR.—We cannot retain the principle of arbitration and the right to strike at the same time.

Senator DE LARGIE.—You should abolish compulsory arbitration altogether if you retain the right to strike.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—I know that it is now being advocated that compulsory arbitration be done away with. Before the days of arbitration, we had not anything like as many strikes as we have had lately.

Senator BARNES.—I am afraid the honorable senator has forgotten much of the history of this country. We were doing nothing else but strike before we had arbitration.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—Whether or not, the policy of Australia to-day is arbitration, and it is for us to make as perfect as possible the machinery of arbitration, which is undoubtedly open to much improvement. The Court should not have the power to grant preference, for that is at the bottom of many of our difficulties. I would also like to have it made law that the funds of unions should not be used for political purposes. I know of men who have been compelled to make payments into a union, and who have seen their money employed to support a political aspirant in whom they do not believe.

Senator BARNES.—Does not the Employers' Federation do the same?

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—The Employers' Federation does not pay any of its money into any political fund.

Senator BARNES.—Then, where do you get all your money from?

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—It is a strict rule, both in Great Britain and the United States, that union funds shall not be applied to political purposes.

Senator BARNES.—You seem to have any amount of money to fight with.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—What we do get is obtained by private subscription; but we are unable to secure anything like the amount of money that the honorable senator's party evidently always has available. I might tell the honorable senator, privately, that the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) was amazed to learn how little money we had when he came over to our side.

Senator SENIOR.—Does not the honorable senator think that more could be made of the principle of conciliation before the parties enter the Arbitration Court?

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—The worst thing one can do is to go into a Court at all. One can never secure conciliation there. One is fighting for one's life in a Court.

Senator DE LARGIE.—If we get away from compulsory arbitration we abandon every prospect of settlement.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—That is the view also held by the Labour unions of Great Britain and the United States of America. I think, personally, that compulsory arbitration is bound to break down, but we have not got to that stage yet, and we must do our best in providing suggestions to help the Arbitration Court to do its work in the best way possible. Arbitration has obviously come to a dead end now; and the Labour unions, which were chiefly responsible for securing the principle of arbitration, are now entirely antagonistic to the Arbitration Court. We must search for some method of improving it, and if it cannot be mended it must be ended.

I have ventured to place several matters before the Government, of which I trust they will take note. We have a most important session ahead of us—one of the most vital, perhaps, that Australia has ever known—and I have done my best to present a few practical ideas. Our chief objective should be the restoration of harmony between employers and employees. I know that the former wish to look upon business not from a profit-making point of view so much as from the humanitarian aspect. They desire that the conditions under which the workers live and toil shall be the best that can be provided. They want good surroundings for the working people so that Australia may produce a race of which we shall all be proud.

Senator EARLE (Tasmania) [12.7].—I regret that the Leader of the Opposition (Senator Gardiner) is not present to-day, although it had not been my intention to spend much time upon the subjects raised by the honorable senator. In his usual aggressive way he made an onslaught upon every one who happened

to disagree with him. I think it is unnecessary to take very much notice of his utterances, because I look upon the honorable senator now as a relic of a dead past. On 30th June next he will stand in this chamber as a monument to remind us of what is not but might have been. The Official Labour party has been found dead, and a coronial inquiry has been held. The verdict has been that the party died through loss of brains, blown out by its own hands while suffering from over-indulgence in a variety of nostrums distilled from anti-Australianism, selfishness, and cowardice. The Official Labour party has undertaken and accomplished political suicide in a most effective manner. That being the case, it is unnecessary, and, perhaps, unkind, of me to make further references to what the Leader of the party in the Senate said in the course of his address. Hence I intend to turn briefly to some of the most important items mentioned in the Governor-General's Speech.

One most important subject is that of the Pacific Possessions of Australia. I know that a short while ago, when our nation was at war, one had to speak guardedly concerning those matters to which I intend now to refer, for the reason that one would be dealing with an ally to whom Australia owes a considerable debt of gratitude. I refer to Japan. Without doubt Japan played the part of an honorable ally by policing the Pacific, and undertaking the safe convoy of our troops. But we have to recognise that there may come a time when Japan will not be so friendly towards Australia. We have to recognise also the potential powers of such a nation. We must remember that Japan within the past twenty-five years or so has sprung up from a very insignificant position among the nations of the world to a foremost place, and we must not overlook that, adjacent to Japan, there is an Asiatic population of anything between 400,000,000 and 500,000,000. There is a marked similarity between the Japanese and many of the peoples of Asia. This resemblance and affinity must, sooner or later enable the Japanese to educate, consolidate, and organize the Asiatic races more effectively than any other nation could do. It is only natural to anticipate that Japan will

exercise great power over China, and that those two nations some day will have become a united factor in the world's affairs. Then, what will be the outcome? There cannot be any natural feeling of fellowship between Asia and Australia. Our principle of a White Australia, by which we must stand or fall, necessarily embitters the Asiatic peoples; and, except for diplomatic reasons, there can be no real friendship between the people of Australia and the millions of Asia. A glance at the map will force us to realize the danger to Australia, should any act of hostility be taken against us by that enormous population. Stretching from Asia to the northern part of Australia is a chain of islands which would enable an invading force, without any difficulty, to jump almost from land to land. Now, we hold, either by original possession or by conquest, very considerable areas in the Pacific, and it behoves us to do all that we can to develop those Possessions, and to settle them with white people. Whilst there are many ways in which Australia may further this policy, the easiest and most important, to my mind, is the establishment of regular steam-ship service with those islands. From private information, I learn that our Possessions in New Guinea—Papua and the annexed German territory—are languishing from lack of regular and reliable steam-ship service.

Senator FOLL.—And because of unsympathetic administration.

Senator EARLE.—Sympathetic administration would naturally follow the establishment of a regular and reliable steam-ship service. Australia is going in for a very effective system of national ownership of steam-ships, a policy with which I entirely agree. The success of any nation depends largely upon the possibility of securing cheap and reliable transport for its commodities. I have heard so much about constitutional law recently that I am beginning to find myself almost in a whirl of doubt. I am not at all clear whether the Government can use their nationally-owned steamers for the purpose of Inter-State trade. That they are at liberty to use them for the transport of goods beyond Australia cannot be questioned. But whether those vessels can be employed in trading to Papua and Tasmania, and to the Possessions which

are not linked up with the mainland by rail, I cannot say.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—I do not think anybody would object to them being thus engaged.

Senator EARLE.—Nor do I. I do not think that the validity of the act would ever be contested. Consequently I urge the Government—important as it is to use our steamers for the transport of goods beyond Australia—to utilize a portion of the fleet for the effective linking up of the mainland with the islands of the Pacific and with the State of Tasmania.

Senator PEARCE.—Very few, if any, of those vessels are suitable for that particular trade. There is no passenger accommodation on any of them.

Senator EARLE.—The trip is not one upon which passengers would suffer any serious inconvenience, and if moderate accommodation were provided, the service would be hailed with delight. I had the pleasure recently of coming across from Tasmania by a large ocean-going boat, and I am quite sure there is not a steamer owned by the Commonwealth which could not provide accommodation equal to that enjoyed by passengers on board that big vessel. Yet there were some hundreds of passengers aboard who were very glad of an opportunity to travel by her. We could not perhaps provide accommodation on our Commonwealth steamers equal to that which is to be found on the White Star liners, but it is not luxurious apartments that are needed. We do not require to cater for wealthy tourists, but for the men who wish to settle in the Pacific Islands, who will build up Australian interests there, and protect our shores against invasion should the occasion to do so ever arise.

Because of its insular position Tasmania must necessarily suffer more or less from Federation. Even if it gets its share of the good things that are dispensed by the Commonwealth, it cannot possibly be as well off as are the States on the mainland. But our Constitution does not allow the Commonwealth to differentiate between States, and the treatment meted out to Victoria and New South Wales must also be that which is meted out to Tasmania and the northern part of Queensland. If it be possible for the Government to employ steamers for the purposes of Inter-State trade, it is

only reasonable to ask that at least one or more of those vessels should be engaged to create a reliable connexion between Tasmania and the mainland.

Senator FOLL.—Under ordinary conditions, is there not a very good service between Tasmania and the mainland?

Senator EARLE.—Ordinary conditions existed so long ago that one almost forgets them. During the past four or five years we have had a continuance of traffic interruptions by reason of strikes.

Senator FOLL.—Were not the Commonwealth vessels held up as the result of those strikes equally with privately-owned vessels?

Senator EARLE.—No doubt. I think that a system could be evolved by which the weapon of the strike might to a large extent be done away with. We do not have strikes in our Civil Service, and why should not the marine engineers, the sailors, and those who can be relied upon to devote their lives to this particular occupation, become civil servants of Australia?

Senator DE LARGIE.—With the Government stroke included?

Senator EARLE.—I know that there is a Government stroke in many institutions; but it does not always exist; and I think that to a very great extent it might be eliminated from this particular service. I do hope that Ministers will give earnest consideration to the suggested extension of facilities for transport to Tasmania and to our northern Possessions in the Pacific.

Another matter which is mentioned in the Governor-General's Speech is that of silver coinage in Australia, and with it I shall connect the utilization of all metals produced in the Commonwealth. At the present time there is a very considerable unrest among the silver and lead workers of this country, in consequence of an embargo having been placed on the export of those metals by the Government. Although that embargo has just been removed for a period of six months, I have very grave doubt whether the producers of these metals are going to obtain a fair return for their product. I have had considerable experience in the production of this class of metal, and I know that in normal times the man who produces a ton of silver-lead ore, generally known as galena, which may be worth

£25 per ton, rarely receives more than £10 or £12 for it. We always had to accept the explanation of the buyers that the cost of treatment, loss by evaporation, loss in transit, and freight charges, absorbed the difference between the value of the ore and the amount that we received. Under the system which has hitherto prevailed, if those who are engaged in the industry get about 30 per cent. of the value of their ore, they are very lucky indeed. Now, this sort of thing cannot continue. If it be important to Australia that these metals should be produced here, and that we should have more silver, more zinc, more copper, and more gold, this class of industry must be encouraged. If it should become necessary—as I anticipate it will, in consequence of the reluctance of buyers to purchase ore at its true value—to further protect the producers of ore, I venture to submit that it will be a statesman-like act to undertake the partial purchase and the effective disposal of it. During my term of office in Tasmania at the beginning of the war, owing to the markets being immediately closed to this particular product, and the difficulty in obtaining money, the whole of the mines in Tasmania were compelled to close down. The Government, recognising the serious position confronting the industry and the mining population, immediately took possession of all ore produced, paid 50 per cent. of its then market value, and held it until the market was re-opened. When sales had been effected the Government paid the producer the difference between the 50 per cent. already advanced and the price at which it was eventually sold. Of course the amount involved was comparatively small, and did not represent more than £50,000, but it had the effect of keeping all the mines vigorously working, and the Treasurer was reimbursed for the advances made. The Commonwealth must consider this important problem if the miners are to be subjected to a system that is tantamount to robbery.

Senator NEWLAND.—Tasmania does not treat its own ore.

Senator EARLE.—No; we were compelled to store and sell it when the market was open. Under these circumstances it will be necessary for the Commonwealth Government to consider

whether they cannot effect a better organization for the disposal or treatment of ores. They should encourage mining by taking over the products of the mines and advancing a sufficient percentage to allow them to continue in operation. It is of vital importance to Australia that as large a quantity as possible of these metals should be produced. Apart from the advantages of having an effective organization to enable the industry to continue and the mining section of the community to be kept in employment, raw materials essential to the welfare of Australia would be produced.

I desire to make a few brief references to the Tariff. I regret that this matter has been so long deferred, because if Australia is to become great she must be self-contained. There are scores of industries in Australia languishing in consequence of the competition of cheaply-manufactured goods, imported from countries paying low rates of wages, and carried by subsidized ships. We can never maintain a high standard and become really prosperous unless we protect our own industries. I do not suggest that an industry should be protected to allow it to exploit the consumer by charging unreasonable prices. I have always been in favour of the principle which was once designated "the New Protection," by which the manufacturer was protected on the understanding that he undertook to pay a reasonable wage to his employees, and to sell his products at a reasonable price. That is a satisfactory form of Protection, but under our present Constitution we know it is impracticable. I am particularly interested in this because I honestly believe, as I forecasted many years ago, that Tasmania is likely to become one of the most important industrial States in the Commonwealth. Tasmania possesses enormous areas of deep water harbours, where the largest vessels afloat can berth against macadamized streets in a depth of 64 feet of water at low tide. We have an excellent climate, and a country in which able-bodied artisans are able to produce more than in other States, where the conditions are less favorable. There is an unlimited supply of hydraulic power, which is available at a very low cost and can be utilized for driving all machinery necessary to manufacture the

requirements of the whole Commonwealth. It will therefore be seen by honorable senators that we have raw materials, natural harbour facilities, cheap power, and ideal climatic conditions. As coal strikes and labour troubles cannot affect the supply of power, Tasmania must necessarily become an important manufacturing centre.

Senator FOLL.—Is the honorable member speaking of Paradise?

Senator EARLE.—No; but it is a very good comparison, because Tasmania is as near Paradise as one is likely to get on earth.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—It must be a Garden of Eden, as you have the apples.

Senator EARLE.—Yes. We produce apples, but not those which cause dissent.

Senator DE LARGIE.—Is there not a valley of despondency?

Senator EARLE.—No; there is no occasion for the Tasmanian people to be despondent.

Senator PEARCE.—The honorable senator is painting a rosy picture of Tasmania. Can he give any reason why they do not smelt their own ores?

Senator EARLE.—The Minister for Defence will realize that it would require the production of a considerable quantity and variety of ores to keep a smelter in Tasmania continually in operation. If a smelting plant to deal with the whole of the ores raised in the Commonwealth were erected, Tasmania would be a valuable contributor.

Senator DE LARGIE. — Why not smelt your own ores?

Senator EARLE.—If the honorable senator had been following me, he would have heard me explaining that it would be necessary to produce a much larger quantity than we do at present to keep a smelter of our own continually in operation.

Senator DE LARGIE.—We produce a large quantity of ore in Australia.

Senator EARLE.—If the honorable senator suggests the establishment of a Commonwealth smelter, I am in accord with his views.

Senator ROWELL.—Has the honorable senator inspected the Port Pirie smelters?

Senator EARLE.—I have not had that privilege. Of course, we do not claim that Tasmania is one of the richest

mineral States in the Commonwealth, but in comparison with its size it is rich in minerals. It has produced £35,000,000 worth of minerals, and the whole State comprises only 16,000,000 acres of land. Tasmania possessed the richest alluvial tin mine in the world, which paid £2,500,000 in dividends. We have rich mines producing silver, copper, tin, and gold—I refer to the Mount Lyell mines. Whether the Government consider the question of the treatment of crude ore up to the ingot stage, or some system of organization to provide a market for the product, it is essential that something should be done.

I was dealing with the question of the Tasmanian industries that have been launched, and are languishing owing to the absence of reasonable protection. We have a very extensive calcium-carbide manufactory, producing an article in general use throughout the Commonwealth. For years we have been importing this illuminant from Japan, Sweden, and Norway, although we have established in Tasmania a factory which, with little alteration, would be capable of providing the whole of the requirements of the Commonwealth. The manufacturers, however, cannot compete with the imports from the countries I have mentioned. This commodity is brought into the Commonwealth from abroad as cheaply as it can be sent from North-west Bay to Queensland.

Senator GUTHRIE.—Has not a regulation been issued prohibiting the importation?

Senator EARLE.—Manufacturers are not prepared to invest capital merely on the security of a licence issued under the hand of the Minister for Trade and Customs. They need something permanent. Manufacturers are not prepared to rely upon a licence that may be repealed at any time. Such a licence or regulation should be embodied in an Act of Parliament to give an industry effective protection.

Senator FOLL.—If embodied in an Act it might only last through the life of the Parliament.

Senator EARLE.—They would be prepared to take that risk. If it became law, it would be likely to remain in force. At the same time there would be a certain stability and a certain guarantee that

the industry affected would be able to be carried on. I am also informed that over £30,000 is waiting for the establishment of a sewing machine factory in my own State, by which a machine will be supplied to the people of Australia considerably cheaper than, and equally as good as, the Singer sewing machine, provided that protection is given to the manufacturer against the cheap dumping of other machines. I have not been able to give very close investigation to that industry up to the present; but my information is as I have stated it. I have every confidence in the reliability of the people concerned in the enterprise, and it is only one of many undertakings which require consideration if we are to make Australia self-contained.

Reference is made to immigration, which is a very serious matter to our country. We have in Australia a rich continent, some 13,000 miles in circumference, capable of producing all that is required by the human race, and occupied by less than 5,000,000 people. We all recognise that we hold this country absolutely and solely owing to the protection which the British Empire gives us. If it were not for the British Empire, with its Navy and other instrumentalities for the protection of Australia, we could not hold it for three months. We must, and do, recognise that fact; but it is our duty to use every effort to relieve the Mother Country and the Empire of that responsibility by increasing our own population. We want white people. We want, if we can get them, those of our own kith and kin. We want English, Irish, Welsh, and Scotch people. We want to encourage them here by the thousands; but we must also be prepared to secure their welfare when they do come. I shall be no party to the rushing in of large numbers of persons looking for manual labour if manual labour is not offering.

Senator FOLL.—We ought to study very seriously the decline in our own birth rate, too.

Senator EARLE.—That is a question which must necessarily be dealt with by the individual. I do not see how we are to interfere unless we can encourage the family more than we are doing at the present time. Although the suggestion has often been received with smiles and

witticisms, the falling birth rate is one of the serious problems facing the white race to-day.

Senator FOLL.—Our birth rate in Australia has decreased by nearly one-half in the last forty years.

Senator EARLE.—I have not looked into the figures. If the honorable senator says that is so, I will accept his assurance; but I should be sorry to learn that it was a fact. I do not know the policy of the Government with regard to immigration; but if it is proposed to assist immigration, even to the extent of bringing out free of charge men and women from the Old Country, for whom positions are already secured, as land workers, skilled artisans, or in any other occupation in which they are required in Australia, I am with the Government right to the hilt.

Another question mentioned in the Governor-General's Speech, and causing considerable interest, is the amendment of the Constitution. In another branch of the Legislature the other evening, a very eloquent address was delivered by a member who argued that it was not necessary to amend the Constitution to deal particularly with excessive profits in trade, because the Constitution already contained the power which would enable the Government to take those steps if they so desired. I do not pose as an authority on constitutional law; but it seems strange to me that, although the party to which that honorable member belongs was in power for a number of years, and was most desirous of obtaining authority to enact laws dealing with trade and commerce, they came to the unanimous conclusion, after obtaining the fullest and best legal advice available in Australia, that they could not enact such laws unless the people amended the Constitution by referendum. They therefore submitted such a referendum to the people on three or four occasions. But on those occasions this particular honorable and learned member did not come along to his own party to advise them that the referendum was superfluous because they had the power already. Another consideration which convinces me that he is absolutely wrong is that, although a large number of legal gentlemen opposed an affirmative vote on

those referenda, not one of them ever opposed it on the ground that the Constitution already gave the power. Every one of them opposed it because he said that the Commonwealth should not have the power. If these legal gentlemen had opposed an affirmative vote on the referendum, knowing that the Constitution already gave the power, would they not have advised the people to vote "No" on that ground? I defy any one to find in any of the reports published throughout Australia one instance of a legal man of any standing advising the people during the referendum campaigns to vote "No" because it was unnecessary to vote "Yes."

Senator FOLL.—The Labour party must have been subsidized by the profiteers to advocate a "No" vote.

Senator EARLE.—It is very hard to understand what their reason was for such an act. These gentlemen, now come along with a declaration that the Constitution already gives the necessary power. I have heard honorable senators say that the honorable and learned member in question made out a good case, which shows how the power of oratory may affect even those who constitute this august Chamber. The argument now put forward, that the Constitution does not require amendment because it contains the necessary powers, is belated indeed. I suppose the most important matters in relation to the alteration of the Constitution are trade and commerce, and the prevention and settlement of industrial disputes within the States. I have had the opportunity of going into the Customs laboratory, where different articles which come into Australia are examined. The Customs Department, having ascertained the true character of imported goods, can insist on these goods being branded with a description true to name, but honorable senators know also that, as soon as those goods go into the warehouses, that brand can be removed, and any other brand placed on them, and the Commonwealth has no power to prevent it. Yet we are told that we have the power under the Constitution. Nothing is more important to the protection of the people than that this Parliament should have power to enact laws for the control of trade throughout the whole Commonwealth. I have seen in that laboratory a boot cut down the centre. As far as I could see, it was composed of about one-third leather, and

the rest paper and wood. Its fellow boot was a beautifully-finished article, and nobody would know that it was not all leather. That case of boots, when it left the Customs, was branded "Boots made of leather, paper, and wood." But has any honorable senator ever seen those boots marked up in any shop under that description?

Senator FOLL.—You do not find that out until you get home.

Senator EARLE.—You do not find it out until you strike a shower, and then you know what you have bought. The people of Australia have been, and are being, ruthlessly robbed, simply because the Commonwealth has not the power to protect them.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.30 p.m.

Senator EARLE.—The honorable and learned member to whom I have referred admits that the Commonwealth has no power to deal with industrial disputes unless they extend beyond the boundaries of a State, though one State may be bordering on a condition of rebellion owing to a condition of industrial discontent. If there is anything at all in the principle of arbitration for the settlement of industrial disputes, it is imperative that the Constitution should be so altered as to permit the Arbitration Court to intervene, and, where practicable, make a common rule applicable to all the States. I recognise that the tribunal should be more accessible than at present. There must be less waste of time in approaching it; and, what is more, any award made by the Court should be retrospective to the date of application. I realize, of course, that there are difficulties to be overcome in this connexion. In the case of an employer with a large number of men paid at a certain rate, a retrospective award might cause him considerable embarrassment.

Senator SENIOR.—What provision could be made in the event of an award being lower than the demand?

Senator EARLE.—Of course, there is no possibility of a refund. There are many difficulties in the way of reforming the Court procedure; but something must be done to amend the existing law. It is almost impossible for the Court to keep pace with the work before it, and so provision should be made, in cases where

men are suffering an injustice, for the award to be retrospective. A great deal of trouble is due to the fact that it is difficult to enforce an award of the Court on both sides; but I do not agree with the honorable senator who stated this morning that the workers must retain the right to strike. A man must retain his individual right to leave work—anything else would be equivalent to a condition of slavery—but we can insist upon some action to combat any organized refusal to work under an award of the Arbitration Court. If half-a-dozen or 100 men individually decide not to work any longer under existing conditions, and if they do not interfere with any others who desire to work, no objection can be taken to their action. It is quite a different matter when an organized body of men not only refuse to work themselves, but demand that no one else shall work in their places, especially when there is proper provision for the trial of their dispute by an impartial tribunal.

Senator ROWELL.—It can never be right to prevent any man from working under any circumstances.

Senator EARLE.—I do not agree with the honorable senator. I have had experience of industrial troubles, when men had no opportunity of an appeal to an Arbitration Court. In such circumstances, they were legally and morally justified in doing their utmost to prevent other men working under conditions which did not insure decent living. I have known of men being brought in to work at wages lower than that which other men deemed sufficient, and I defy any honorable senator to say that in such circumstances the strikers were not morally and legally justified in trying to prevent others from taking their places. I am speaking, of course, of a time when there was no opportunity of an appeal to an Arbitration Court. But we have set up this tribunal in Australia, and one of our chief difficulties now is to make an award of the Court binding on both sides. If we can remove this difficulty there should then be no right to strike or lock-out.

Senator FOLL.—Are not the awards supposed to be binding at present?

Senator EARLE.—The honorable senator knows they are not binding.

Senator FOLL.—Then, how do you propose to make them effective?

Senator EARLE.—I believe that every union should be registered as at present, and that every member of a union should likewise be registered in much the same manner as are members of friendly societies. Every union should be required to deposit in a bank a sum of money, calculated at a given rate per head of its membership, and this trust fund should be alienable by order of the Arbitration Court on proof of any infringement of an award. The unions should be required to maintain the fund at an amount decided upon, and if members of a union break an award of the Arbitration Court, say, by refusing to work under it, they should be fined some prescribed amount, and the union should be required to collect the fine to reimburse the bank trust fund.

Senator GUTHRIE.—You are referring to action against Inter-State unions. Some unions are international in character. How could their funds be touched?

Senator EARLE.—I know there are difficulties to be overcome, and I am referring to the position of State or Inter-State unions. Let us cleanse our own home first. If we can make a success of the system as applied to Inter-State unions we can then seek to extend the area of its benefits.

Senator GUTHRIE.—The biggest union in Australia is international in character.

Senator EARLE.—I quite understand the difficulty referred to by the honorable senator. If he has a better scheme to put forward I shall be pleased to hear of it. In order to make the proposed scheme more effective I think there should be provision that fines or levies necessary to recoup the trust fund should be recoverable in any Court of summary jurisdiction, and if the unions refused to collect the amount it should be the duty of the Arbitration Court to order collection. These fines or levies might be regarded as a debt under common law, and be recoverable by a garnishee order, or any other method provided for by law, so that if through an infringement of an award of the Court a unionist became liable and declined to pay a fine, the debt would be recoverable in any State of the Commonwealth.

Senator GUTHRIE.—How could you collect from a man in San Francisco?

Senator EARLE.—Why does the honorable senator quote those extreme instances? If a unionist leaves Australia, let him go, and God go with him. If he continues to live in Australia the fine could be collected. It is no use sneering at the proposition. If honorable senators can put up some better scheme, let us have it. Under the proposal I have outlined members of a union will be responsible for industrial peace, and there will then be justification for the principle of preference to unionists in employment. It is impossible for employers to go back to the conditions of twenty years ago, as some suggest, when there was no interference at all between employer and employee. I thank God it is so, for I do not want to see the workers of Australia under those conditions again.

Senator SENIOR.—The working out of that principle would do away with non-unionism. The workers would have to belong to unions.

Senator EARLE.—Most of the workers would naturally and rightly belong to one or other of the various unions. I have the greatest sympathy with genuine industrial unionism. I am an industrial unionist myself, and always will be. It is necessary for the workers to combine for their own protection and welfare, in keeping with the combination of other sections of the community. I hope that these few practical points which I have enunciated, and to which I have given much thought and attention, will be studied by the Government, and lead ultimately to the consummation of that which we so devoutly wish for, namely, a system of arbitration for the settlement of disputes which will provide Australia with a guarantee of industrial peace and without which we can never hope to become a nation.

There are several other features of His Excellency's speech which are worthy of consideration. One relates to the popular subject of profiteering. The word "profiteer" is being used by some people very much as a foolish mother employs the word "bogyman." It is used to frighten folk, and it is applied to almost everything. There are very many phases of profiteering. Instances have occurred where unscrupulous traders

have cornered the necessities of life in order to enforce excess profits. That is profiteering in a bad form. Enormous profits have been made because of the shortage in the world's transport service. There is still another system of profiteering which goes on really unconsciously among my own class, namely, the workers of Australia. I have every sympathy, especially at this time, with workers who are seeking better payment for their labour. But those who are out to do less work in shorter hours are the equal of the greatest of profiteers. Take the case of the builders' labourers, for example, who are now advocating a five-day week in a healthy occupation.

Senator DE LARGIE.—Four days too many!

Senator EARLE.—Perhaps so, from some people's viewpoint; but it amounts to the creation of an inflated value upon houses already erected, and is tantamount to a close co-operation between builders and landlords. A man has a dozen houses which have cost him £700 each. As an outcome of the demand of the labourers for shorter hours and less work those houses are now worth anything from £1,000 to £1,200 each. Thus the landlords reap enhanced rentals which have been won for them by the workers. I do not mind how energetic the labouring community are in securing more pay for their labour to-day, but I have no sympathy with those who shirk the responsibility of production by either doing less work than is reasonable, or by seeking to work fewer hours than is reasonable. If we are to subdue profiteering, if we wish to reduce the cost of living, **we must engage far more energetically in production.** We must work with a will, for that is the key to the whole situation. Until the workers realize that it is their duty to find pleasure in production rather than in avoiding production, we shall never bring down the high cost of living. I hope the workers generally will take that fact to heart, and that we shall receive from them wholehearted co-operation towards making the lot of the people more congenial.

One other matter to which I desire to devote a few minutes has to do with the erection of the Federal Capital. Many people, in certain parts of the Commonwealth, are agitating for its completion.

I am not well informed concerning how far we are committed to the construction of the Federal Capital at Canberra. The main idea underlying the erection of an inland or bush capital originally was that it should be placed in a position of safety from attack by sea. The fact is, of course, that the Federal Capital would be no safer to-day whether it was at Canberra or in Melbourne or Sydney. I can see no practical reason for the erection of a bush capital now that the factor of safety from sea attack has been removed.

Senator GUTHRIE. — Has it been removed?

Senator EARLE. — The honorable senator must know that if ever our Capital is to be attacked it will be neither by sea nor land, but from the air. I do not know how far Commonwealth Governments, past and present, may be committed to the erection of the Capital City at Canberra; but, in view of the tremendous expenditure necessary, I question whether it would not be reasonable to submit to the people of New South Wales, by way of referendum, that they should release the Federal Government from their obligations in this respect.

Senator HENDERSON. — I would like to bet on the result of the referendum.

Senator EARLE. — I am not so sure about the result. I give the people of New South Wales, as Commonwealth citizens, credit —

Senator GUTHRIE. — For being selfish.

Senator EARLE. — No, I will not say that; but for possessing reasonableness, and for recognising that they would have to pay their share of the bill.

Senator PRATTEN. — Forty-two per cent. of it.

Senator EARLE. — Yes; and if it can be shown them that no advantage could be gained by the establishment of this bush Capital, I believe they would seriously consider whether it would not be better to abandon the idea and allow the Commonwealth Capital to remain in one or other of the chief cities.

In discussing the attitude of Australia towards former enemy countries, I have noted considerable diversity of opinion, particularly with regard to the re-estab-

lishment of trade with Germany. We need not waste time in recalling the conditions of trade and commerce with that country prior to the war. Australia helped materially to build up Germany's resources, and these were used against us when the war broke out. The question arises whether, either now or in the near future, we should assist to re-establish that trade and commerce. Some people say that since we have called upon Germany to pay an indemnity, in which Australia is to participate, we must have commercial dealings with Germany, otherwise she will be unable to pay. That argument appears to have the force of reason. But if it is a question whether we shall have the indemnity and re-establish our trade with Germany, or whether we shall refuse to enter into trading relationships and lose the indemnity thereby, I say that we should lose the indemnity. Rather let us lose that than that we should deal again with Germany and assist her to regain the position which she occupied before she forced war upon the world. Some people fail to realize that if we are going to enable Germany to pay her indemnity by purchasing goods from her, we shall merely be taking money out of our own pockets to pass it through the Exchequer. Consequently, it is better for us to build up our own commerce, and to wipe off what has been lost in consequence of the war, as a bad debt.

Senator SENIOR. — But we cannot prevent trade with Germany.

Senator EARLE. — So far as we cannot prevent it, we must endure it. But every public man should voice the opinion that the people of Australia should focus their attention upon building up their own industries, refusing, as far as possible, to deal with Germany, and devoting their whole efforts to making this a self-supporting country. By adopting that policy, we can, in the very near future, overcome many of our difficulties, and instead of being solely dependent upon the Mother Country for our protection, we shall become so strong that when the occasion arises we shall be able to take an active part in protecting the Empire.

Debate (on motion by Senator DE LARGIE) — adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

SUPPLY BILL—MURRAY RIVER WATERS COMMISSION: LABOUR DISPUTE—CYCLONE IN NORTH QUEENSLAND—SYDNEY TELEPHONE SERVICE.

Senator PEARCE (Western Australia—Minister for Defence) [3.4].—In moving—

That the Senate do now adjourn.

I wish to inform honorable senators that we had hoped that the Supply Bill would reach us to-day, so as to enable us to proceed with the first stage of its consideration. Of course, that would have been only a formal stage in any case. We would not have proceeded with the motion for the first reading of the Bill. The Minister for Repatriation (Senator Millen), and other Ministers, feel that it is unfair to ask the Senate to deal hurriedly with Supply Bills; but, at the same time, we are conditioned by the knowledge that the expenditure sought to be authorized under the forthcoming Supply Bill will become payable on Thursday next. However, the conditions which have led to the delay in the presentation of that measure here have not been within the control of the Government. Consequently, when we meet next week, it will be necessary to ask honorable senators to proceed at once with the consideration of the Bill.

Senator BARNES (Victoria) [3.5].—I understand that the Commonwealth is spending a lot of money upon the River Murray Waters Scheme. There is in existence a River Murray Waters Commission, and I desire to know whether the Commonwealth has any control over its expenditure. I ask this question because, at the present time, there is a labour dispute on the Murray. A couple of big jobs are being held up because, on the New South Wales side of that river, the men, who are working under an Arbitration Court award, are receiving 14s. 3d. per day, whilst those working on the Victorian side, who cannot get an Arbitration Court award, are receiving only 12s. per day. I desire the Government to interest themselves in this dispute, if possible, with a view to securing its settlement. If we are spending money there, we ought to have some control over that expenditure.

Senator FOLL (Queensland) [3.7].—Earlier in the day I asked whether it was not possible for the Government to render some assistance to the people of North Queensland, who are suffering from the disastrous effects of a recent cyclone. In reply, I was informed that, owing to our precarious financial position, it is not possible to afford them relief, and if any such relief were afforded, it would be necessary to provide similar relief to persons suffering from the effects of drought. Probably my question was not specific enough. My desire was to direct attention to the fact that when a cyclone occurred in Queensland some time ago, a quantity of cane and raw sugar was damaged, and the Commonwealth authorities granted relief to the sufferers on the basis of £1 for £1 granted by the State Government. In view of the fact that the sugar-growers of Queensland are supplying sugar to the people at about one-fourth of the price at which it can be purchased in other countries, it is surely the duty of the Government to take some action in the direction I have suggested. Seeing the very great importance of the sugar industry to Australia, I ask Ministers to reconsider the position.

Senator PRATTEN (New South Wales) [3.9].—I desire briefly to direct attention to the state of the telephone service in Sydney and its suburbs, and I hope that the Minister for Defence (Senator Pearce) will communicate with the Postmaster-General (Mr. Wise) regarding this matter. The Sydney telephone service to-day is admittedly in a worse condition than it has ever been previously. I have had many experiences of it, and I must candidly say that the efficiency and speed of the service which is provided in Melbourne are very marked when contrasted with those of Sydney. Some say that there is a "go-slow" strike in progress amongst the attendants in the New South Wales capital. Others say that they are not paid sufficiently well, and that they are adopting certain tactics for the purpose of directing the attention of the Postmaster-General to their small remuneration. But the fact remains that this queen city, with a population of 750,000 souls, owns at present the least efficient telephone service in the world. I have been told officially that it will be worse before it is better. If it is to become worse than it is now, it is going to be

very bad indeed. During recent years the telephone charges have been raised more than once, and the subscribers to-day number nearly 20,000. I ask the Minister for Defence most seriously to bring this matter under the notice of his colleague the Postmaster-General, who, I hope, will cause inquiries to be made, because the existing condition of things cannot be allowed to continue.

Senator PEARCE (Western Australia—Minister for Defence) [3.12].—In regard to the question raised by Senator Barnes, who referred to the Murray River Waters Commission, the position is that the Commonwealth is a partner with three of the States to the extent that each of those States will contribute £1,000,000 and the Commonwealth will provide an equal amount. The Commission has been constituted of a representative of each of those States and of the Commonwealth. The latter is the Chairman of that body. The Commission does not possess plenary powers, but recommends to the Governments interested in the scheme the works which should be undertaken. In the case mentioned by Senator Barnes, the probability is that the works in question are being carried out under the supervision of the Works Department of New South Wales and Victoria respectively. Whether the fact that the Commonwealth is a contributor to the cost of those works gives it any right to intervene in an industrial dispute, I cannot say. But I will have his remarks brought under the notice of the Minister for Works and Railways, who will doubtless give consideration to it.

In reply to Senator Foll, I wish to say that it is quite true that on a previous occasion the Commonwealth Government did make available a certain sum of money—and Parliament subsequently indorsed their action—to recoup certain persons for a portion of the loss which they had sustained consequent upon a cyclone in North Queensland. But it was distinctly understood at the time that the act was one of grace, and was not a recognition by the Commonwealth of its liability to make good losses sustained as the result of cyclones in Queensland. The action of the Government was also partially dictated by the fact that the sugar industry, in which the Commonwealth had a particular interest, had been injured, and that financial assistance would help it to effect a quick recovery. However, I shall have the honorable member's re-

marks brought under the notice of the Treasurer for his consideration.

Regarding the condition of the telephone service in Sydney, my memory is not too good, but I fancy that earlier in the day Senator Fairbairn referred to the fact that that service was somewhat overstaffed. Of course it does not necessarily follow that, because of that fact, the staff would do more work.

Senator DE LARGIE.—How do the operating costs in the different capitals compare?

Senator PEARCE.—The operating expenses are given on page 11 of the Economics Commission's report, and show that the cost of earning £100 revenue is, in New South Wales, which heads the list, £18.89; and in Victoria, £15.82. The average for the whole Commonwealth is £17.15.

Senator PRATTEN.—What has that to do with the question I raised?

Senator PEARCE.—I have given the cost of operating the telephone service in New South Wales and Victoria, and the average for the Commonwealth, which shows that the trouble is not due to the lack of expenditure. I wish to reassure honorable senators that, as the Commonwealth has made sufficient money available, there must be some other reason. I shall, however, bring the matter under the notice of the Postmaster-General (Mr. Wise).

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Senate adjourned at 3.16 p.m.

House of Representatives.

Friday, 12 March, 1920.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. W. Elliot Johnson) took the chair at 11.0 a.m., and read prayers.

STEAMER *MUSGROVE*.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—Owing to the difficulty in obtaining wheat supplies for Tasmania, the local millers have bought the steamer *Musgrove*, but are experiencing trouble in getting it transferred to the trade. As there is urgent need in the State of constant wheat supplies from the mainland, I ask the Minister representing shipping if steps can be taken to give delivery of the vessel which has been purchased?

Mr. POYNTON.—I shall bring the honorable member's remarks under the notice of Senator Russell, who is in charge of shipping at the present time, and shall give him an answer later.

WHEAT.

PRICES, FREIGHTS, AND COSTS.

Mr. STEWART (for Mr. GREGORY) asked the Prime Minister, *upon notice*—

1. Whether his attention has been drawn to a pamphlet issued by the National Campaign Council published in November, 1919, in which it was asserted that the London parity for Australian wheat from January to May, 1919, was 3s. 9d. per bushel, and from June to October, 1919, 2s. 9d. per bushel?

2. Is that statement a fair and correct one?

3. What was the average British price of wheat from January to May, 1919?

4. What was the average price from June to October, 1919?

5. What were the average costs of shipping wheat from Australia to London, including freight, insurance, and other charges from January to May, 1919?

6. What were the average similar costs from June to October, 1919?

7. What were the average freights charged by the Australian Government shipping during the same periods?

Mr. HUGHES.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follows:—

1. Yes.

2. The figures referred to by the honorable member were apparently extracted from the No. 3 Report of the Victorian Royal Commission on High Prices. That report states that the figures were discussed in detail by the Commission with the President of the Victorian Farmers' Union (now the honorable member for Echuca), who, the Commission stated, accepted as accurate the c.i.f. prices United Kingdom quoted, and who concurred in all the other figures. Owing to the impossibility of obtaining free freight from Australia to London in 1919, in any quantity, even at exorbitant rates, it cannot be said with any certainty, or even degree of accuracy, what true London parity of Australian wheat was at any time during the year. The statement does not appear to be an unfair one.

3. From January to May, 1919, only three full cargoes and one parcel of Australian wheat were sold to the United Kingdom. These realized 78s. per quarter for one cargo, and 72s. 6d. per quarter for the other two cargoes, and for the parcel—shipment was made in Commonwealth Government line steamers, no other freight being available.

4. From June to October, 1919, two parcels of Australian wheat were sold on the basis of 85s. per quarter, two parcels at 83s. 6d., and one parcel at 72s. 6d. Freight was provided by the Commonwealth Government line. No full cargoes were sold, freight not being available.

5. The only freight procurable was from the Commonwealth Government line, the cost of which, together with insurance, and other charges, equalled 3s. per bushel. One uncontrolled steamer was chartered by the Wheat Board to carry flour from Fremantle to Denmark. The freight was 225s. per ton.

6. Again, the only freight procurable was that of the Commonwealth Government line, the rate together with insurance, and other costs, equalling 3s. per bushel. One owner indicated that he was prepared to consider business from Fremantle to Havre at 270s. per ton.

7. See answers to Nos. 5 and 6.

SHIPBUILDING CONTRACTS.

Mr. FOWLER asked the Minister for the Navy, *upon notice*—

1. Did he, during his recent visit to Great Britain, enter into any contracts for the building of ships for the Commonwealth?

2. If so, will the Prime Minister cause to be laid on the table of the House copies of the contracts together with all the correspondence relating to them?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follow:—

1. Yes.

2. Yes.

SHIPMENT OF TALLOW

Mr. RODGERS asked the Minister for Trade and Customs, *upon notice*—

1. Will the Government make available a portion of the space on vessels of the Commonwealth line of steamers for the shipment of Victorian tallow, which is the product of meat killed on behalf of the Imperial Government?

2. What quantity of tallow from each State has been carried on vessels of the Commonwealth line of steamers?

3. Is it possible for the Commonwealth Government to make arrangements for freight to be granted on vessels other than those mentioned in paragraph No. 1 for the shipment of Victorian tallow, which is the product of meat killed on behalf of the Imperial Government?

4. What is the last date upon which allotment of space of oversea shipping was made for Victorian tallow?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follow:—

1. Yes, as far as possible.

2. The following is a summary of tallow shipments to date by the Commonwealth Government steamers, including ex-enemy vessels:—

	Tons.
Queensland ..	3,967
New South Wales ..	2,202
Victoria ..	2,698
South Australia ..	1,497
Western Australia ..	1,155

11,519

3 and 4. Inquiry will be made, and I shall endeavour to furnish the honorable member with a reply as soon as possible.

TAXATION COMMISSION.

Mr. McWILLIAMS (for Mr. JOWETT) asked the Treasurer, *upon notice*—

With reference to the Government's announced decision to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the incidence of taxation, has the Government yet considered the *personnel* of such a Commission; and, if not, will the Government favorably consider a *personnel* as follows:—(a) As Chairman, a High Court or Supreme Court Judge; a nominee (b) of the Commonwealth Government; (c) of the State Governments of Australia; (d) of the primary producers of Australia; (e) of the manufacturers of Australia; (f) of the commercial and trading community of Australia?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The intention of the Government is to make the *personnel* of the proposed Royal Commission as representative as possible of all interests, including some of those mentioned by the honorable member.

CASE OF C. G. BAKER.

Mr. WEST asked the Attorney-General, *upon notice*—

1. Whether his attention has been drawn to the decision of the Chief Justice in the case of Cyril George Baker, a returned soldier, who was sued in the Victorian Supreme Court by the Minister for Defence for the recovery of certain moneys alleged to have been paid to him in excess of what he should have received as a soldier?

2. If so, does he propose to give instructions to those responsible for the action referred to so that, in future, greater attention may be given to the facts of a case before recommending proceedings to be taken?

Mr. GROOM.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follow:—

1. Yes.

2. Careful attention is invariably given to the facts in all cases before proceedings are instituted.

COMMONWEALTH ELECTIONS.

INFORMAL VOTES.

Mr. WATKINS (for Mr. RYAN) asked the Minister for Home and Territories, *upon notice*—

How many informal votes were there in the recent Commonwealth elections held on the 13th December last—

1. In New South Wales—(a) in the Senate election; (b) in the election for the House of Representatives?

2. In Victoria—(a) in the Senate election; (b) in the election for the House of Representatives?

3. In Queensland—(a) in the Senate election; (b) in the election for the House of Representatives?

4. In South Australia—(a) in the Senate election; (b) in the election for the House of Representatives?

5. In Western Australia—(a) in the Senate election; (b) in the election for the House of Representatives?

6. In Tasmania—(a) in the Senate election; (b) in the election for the House of Representatives?

Mr. POYNTON.—The number of informal ballot-papers in the recent elections was as follows:—

New South Wales—Senate, 67,227; House of Representatives, 26,520.

Victoria—Senate, 49,605; House of Representatives, 14,347.

Queensland—Senate, 26,468; House of Representatives, 10,840.

South Australia—Senate, 16,135; House of Representatives, 9,634.

Western Australia—Senate, 9,315; House of Representatives, 3,890.

Tasmania—Senate, 6,364; House of Representatives, 3,304.

Total for Commonwealth—Senate, 175,114; House of Representatives, 68,535.

TELEPHONE TRUNK LINES.

Mr. WATKINS asked the Postmaster-General, *upon notice*—

1. How many trunk telephone lines are there between the cities of Melbourne and Ballarat, and what is the annual revenue received for the use of such lines?

2. How many trunk lines are there between the cities of Sydney and Newcastle, and what is the annual revenue received for the use of such lines?

Mr. WISE.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follow:—

1. Between Melbourne and Ballarat there are six (6) trunk lines.

2. Between Sydney and Newcastle there are seven (7).

Figures showing the revenue received for the use of the trunk lines referred to are not available. Separate accounts are kept only for the Inter-State trunk lines, Sydney-Melbourne and Adelaide-Melbourne respectively; all other trunk lines are grouped under one heading in the departmental accounts.

WAR PRECAUTIONS ACT.

PROCLAMATION OF PEACE.

Mr. GABB asked the Prime Minister, *upon notice*—

1. Whether it is a fact that the war with Germany and Austria-Hungary has ceased?

2. If so, what prevents the issue by the Governor-General of the Proclamation specified in section 2 of the War Precautions Act 1914-1918, declaring that the war with Germany and Austria-Hungary has ceased?

Mr. HUGHES.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follow:—

1. War with Germany terminated on the 10th January, 1920. The war with Austria-Hungary has not yet ceased.

2. See answer to No. 1.

PRICE OF KEROSENE.

Mr. LAZZARINI asked the Minister for Trade and Customs, *upon notice*—

1. Whether a boat is within a few days' sail of Australia with 37,000 cases of kerosene on board?

2. If so, was this known to the Government when the increase of 9s. per case on kerosene was granted to the Texas Oil Company?

Mr. GREENE.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follow:—

1. As far as can be ascertained, there is no vessel due to arrive in Australia until early in May.

2. The regulation of oil prices is not now controlled by the Commonwealth Government, and it is understood the increase referred to by the honorable member was granted by the Prices Commission in New South Wales after investigation of the books of the company.

MILITARY CONTROL OF WHARFS AND STEAMERS.

Mr. GABB asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, *upon notice*—

1. Whether it is a fact that a naturalized German or Austrian is not allowed to go on a pier when a vessel is arriving or departing?

2. If this is so, how much longer is such action necessary?

3. Is it a fact that the military authorities control mail steamers in port?

4. If so, is such control exercised for the purpose of the defence of the Empire?

Sir GRANVILLE RYRIE.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follow:—

1. Until the War Precautions Regulations are repealed, naturalized subjects of enemy origin are not allowed on piers without a permit.

2. Until the regulations are repealed.

3. The only control exercised over the mail ships by the military authorities, with the assistance of the Customs authorities, is in connexion with the passports or permits of persons arriving or departing by such ships; this duty will in a few days be carried out by the Department responsible for passports.

4. No; but as persons wishing to land in the United Kingdom or elsewhere must be in possession of proper passports or permits, control has to be exercised to see that they are in possession of same in their own interests.

QUEENSLAND INCOME TAX ACT.

COMMONWEALTH WAR LOANS.

Mr. MACKAY asked the Treasurer, *upon notice*—

Whether he intends taking any action with reference to the recent amendment of the Queensland Income Tax Act, whereby the interest on the various issues of the Commonwealth war loans—which are free from taxation—is to be taken into consideration in assessing the tax due in the State referred to?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The Treasurer has given consideration to this matter, and is awaiting advice from the Commonwealth law officers.

BULIMBA PINEAPPLE CANNERY.

Mr. MACKAY asked the Minister for Repatriation, *upon notice*—

Whether the Repatriation Department has been asked to repay the cost of the factory recently erected at Bulimba by the Queensland Government for the purpose of canning pineapples from the returned soldier settlements?

Mr. POYNTON.—No.

ARBITRATION AWARDS.

TELEGRAPH OFFICERS AND LINESMEN.

Mr. BLUNDELL asked the Postmaster-General, *upon notice*—

When will the arbitration awards of Post and Telegraph officers and line inspectors be paid?

Mr. WISE.—The law provides that such arbitration awards must be laid on the table of the House for thirty days before they can come into operation. This has been done in regard to the awards referred to, and, provided Parliament does not disapprove, the payments thereunder will be made on and after 29th March and 3rd April, 1920, respectively.

NAVY COMMANDERS.

ENTERTAINMENT ALLOWANCES.

Mr. BOWDEN asked the Minister for the Navy, *upon notice*—

1. Whether it is a fact that Navy Commanders are sometimes tendered civic receptions on their arrival at various ports?

2. If so, is it a fact that when these courtesies are reciprocated, and functions are arranged on board the ships, the cost of the same is a personal charge on the captains and officers?

3. Will the Minister consider the advisability of giving special entertainment allowances to captains of ships?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I shall have the matter inquired into, and advise the honorable member as early as possible.

CASE OF MR. MORLEY.

Mr. TUDOR (for Dr. MALONEY) asked the Minister for Home and Territories, *upon notice*—

1. Is it a fact that at the last Federal elections, at the Town Hall, Melbourne, Mr. Morley, barrister, infringed the Electoral Act by defiantly voting openly at a table within a yard of the box, in spite of a protest made by all the officials at the table?

2. Was a protest in writing signed and entered in the official memorandum book by those officials?

3. Is Mr. Morley to be prosecuted under the Electoral Act?

Mr. POYNTON.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follows:—

1 and 2. An official note made in the Presiding Officer's memorandum book discloses that Mr. Morley marked his ballot-papers at the Presiding Officer's table instead of proceeding, as he should have done, to a voting compartment.

3. The matter is under consideration.

PRICE OF CORNSACKS.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY asked the Minister for Trade and Customs, *upon notice*—

Whether in view of the prevailing high price of cornsacks, it is proposed to take steps to insure a supply at reasonable rates for the coming season?

Mr. GREENE.—As it is the policy of the Government to permit trade to flow back into non-governmental channels, the Government do not propose to take any steps in the direction indicated by the honorable member.

SALE OF PROPERTY TO RETURNED SOLDIERS.

AGENTS' CHARGES.

Mr. TUDOR (for Dr. MALONEY) asked the Minister representing the Minister for Repatriation, *upon notice*—

1. Will he inform the House what rates should be charged by agents who conduct the sale of property to returned soldiers?

2. In order to prevent certain agents from fleecing returned soldiers who buy properties, will the Minister make public the commission that should be paid, and, if necessary, take steps to enforce justice for our returned men?

Mr. POYNTON.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follows:—

1. The Estate Agents' Association have adopted a scale of charges, commencing at 5 per cent. and diminishing to 1 per cent., according to the amount of the sale. Agents not members of the association are free to charge what commission they like, subject to appeal to the Court by purchasers.

2. With a view to safeguarding the interests of soldiers, I have frequently, through the press, suggested to soldiers the advisability of placing themselves in communication with the War Service Homes Commission before entering into any definite contracts.

TREASURER'S PRIVATE SECRETARY.

Mr. FENTON (for Mr. BRENNAN) asked the Treasurer, *upon notice*—

1. Is it a fact that the position of private secretary to the Treasurer has been filled by a gentleman who has not complied with the conditions laid down by the Commonwealth Public Service Act?

2. If so—(a) what are the qualifications of the officer in question; (b) could not a suitable private secretary be found among the thousands of officers who have entered the Public Service in the recognised statutory way?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The answer to the honorable member's questions is as follows:—

1 and 2. No. The gentleman who has been appointed to the position of private secretary to the Treasurer has complied with the conditions laid down by the Commonwealth Public Service Act. The appointment is a temporary one only, and has been approved by the Public Service Commissioner.

INTERNEES.

NATIVE BORN AND NATURALIZED.

Mr. HUGHES.—On the 3rd March, the honorable member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Mahon) asked me the following questions:—

1. Are any persons still interned in concentration camps; if so, how many?

2. The number of native-born Australians interned since August, 1914, and the same information regarding naturalized persons?

3. Have any persons been deported who claimed naturalization in some part of the Empire; if so, how many?

4. The total cost of the internment camps to date?

5. How many persons were interned at the request of the British Government; what has been the cost of their maintenance; and whether the Government have obtained a refund of same?

6. In view of the fact that persons interned during the war were not informed of the charges against them, nor confronted with their accusers, what steps do the Government propose to take to satisfy the House and the people of Australia that injustice has not been done to many accused persons?

I then furnished a reply to question No. 6, and intimated that the information asked for in Nos. 1 to 5 would require some time to prepare, but that I would make it available as soon as possible. I am now in a position to supply the honorable member with the following replies to Nos. 1 to 5:—

1. Thirty-eight.

2. Native born of enemy origin, thirty-one; naturalized, 267.

3. No former naturalized subjects were deported without denaturalization. Nineteen denaturalized subjects were deported.

4. No separate record has been kept of cost of internment camps. All expenses relating to internees have been charged to item—"Expenditure in connexion with Interned Enemy Subjects"—the bulk of which is camp expenditure, and the total, to 31st January, 1920, is £1,335,084.

5. One thousand one hundred and two. Estimated amount chargeable against Great Britain, about £250,000. Amount refunded to date, £153,894.

JUDICIARY BILL.

Motion (by Mr. HUGHES), *by leave*, agreed to—

That leave be given to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend the Judiciary Act 1913-1915, and for other purposes.

PAPERS.

The following papers were presented:—

Postmaster-General's Department—Ninth Annual Report, 1918-19.

Peace—

Austria—Treaty of Peace between the Allied and Associated Powers and Austria, together with the Protocol and Declarations Annexed thereto, signed at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 14th September, 1919.

Treaty of Peace between Allied and Associated Powers and Austria—Protocol of signature. (Paper presented to the British Parliament.)

Austro-Hungary—Agreement between the Allied and Associated Powers with regard to the contributions to the cost of liberation of the territories of the former Austro-Hungarian monarchy, signed at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 10th September, 1919.

Italian Reparation Payments—Agreement between the Allied and Associated Powers with regard to, signed at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 10th September, 1919.

Ordered to be printed.

Public Service Act—Regulations Amended—Statutory Rules 1920, No. 36.

SUPPLY BILL (No. 4) 1919-20.

In Committee: Consideration resumed from 11th March (*vide* page 352.)

Clause 2 (Issue and application of £5,727,180).

Mr. TUDOR (Yarra) [11.19].—When the Treasurer (Mr. Watt) was explaining the Supply Bill to the Committee, he stated that the amount provided for in this Bill would carry the Government on till the end of May. That means that we are asked to practically pass Supply for nearly the whole of the remainder of the financial year without having an opportunity of discussing the expenditure. I remember the Minister for the Navy (Sir Joseph Cook), when he was sitting on this side of the House, writing for the *Sydney Mail* a series of articles called "The Financial Carnival." If the country was engaged in a financial carnival then, the present rate of expenditure might be described by a much stronger phrase. At that time Supply was usually obtained for a month at a time; only on exceedingly rare occasions was the House asked to vote Supply for three or four months. We have departed from that practice. The Treasurer stated also that but for the election having intervened, the Estimates would have been disposed of in December of last year. He went on to say that the reason they were not dealt with was that after the Prime Minister returned from England, Parliament was busy in dealing with the various Pools and other matters. He was evidently referring to the Commercial Activities Bill. I find that the Prime Minister returned to Australia in August, whilst the Commercial Activities Bill passed through this House on the 31st July. I believe that it was assented to before the Prime Minister's

arrival, so that the explanation given by the Treasurer was absolutely incorrect.

Mr. HUGHES.—What is the good of bothering with what happened in the last Parliament? Why not get on with the job?

Mr. TUDOR.—I shall get on with the job. In order to obviate an all-night sitting, which I am always ready to avoid if possible, I promised the Prime Minister last night that the Supply Bill would be passed through the House by 4 o'clock this afternoon. That undertaking will be honoured by every honorable member on this side of the House.

One matter has apparently been lost sight of. The Treasurer forecasted an amendment of the Public Service Act to place the Service under a Board of Management. That will mean probably the appointment of three Commissioners instead of one. We were told subsequently that the Post Office would be placed under a Board of business men. As a representative of a metropolitan constituency, I do not think that that arrangement will be bad for the vested city interests, but if I were a country representative, I should not like to see the control of the Post Office handed over to men who will see that the city interests are looked after. We shall have exactly the same trouble as is experienced in the State Parliament in connexion with the railways. There the Minister shelters himself behind the excuse that the Railway Department is being managed by the Commissioners, and he has no power at all.

I did not speak to the amendment put forward by the Country party, because I felt that honorable members who had not spoken on the censure motion moved by me had a prior claim. There are many items in the Bill which should be discussed. Some honorable members will desire to know why one State receives different treatment from the others in regard to the export of base metals. So that other honorable members may have an opportunity of bringing before the Committee the items in which they are interested, I shall content myself with having placed on record the inaccuracy of the Treasurer's statement regarding the reason for not proceeding with the Estimates last year.

Mr. FENTON (Maribyrnong) [11.25].—This clause covers the whole total of the Supply Bill. If it is agreed to, will honorable members be precluded from moving amendments to the Schedule or will it be contended that, having agreed to clause 2, the Committee has assented to the full total of the Bill?

The CHAIRMAN (Hon. J. M. Charter).—No.

Mr. RYAN (West Sydney) [11.26].—There has been a good deal of discussion regarding economy and the reduction of expenditure. Although I took no part in the debate on the amendment moved by the honorable member for Franklin (Mr. McWilliams), I have listened with considerable interest to it. The striking feature of the debate was that when honorable members had an opportunity, a few days previously, of casting a vote in support of the principle for which they alleged they were standing, they refused to vote against the Government, presumably, because the motion was moved by the Leader of the Opposition. Honorable members in the Ministerial corner were found voting with the representatives of the middlemen. I think the honorable member for Kooyong (Sir Robert Best) was justified in his suggestion that honorable members in the Ministerial corner had really passed a vote of confidence in the Government, but that they then turned round and moved what amounted to a vote of want of confidence.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—We had tabled our amendment before any other was indicated.

Mr. RYAN.—But the honorable member specifically stated that his amendment was not intended to be a vote of want of confidence.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—Yes.

Mr. RYAN.—The honorable member said that the amendment was moved in a spirit of sympathy with the Government. And it was remarkable that when the division took place the Country party did not vote solidly.

The CHAIRMAN.—The honorable member is not in order in dealing with something upon which the Committee has already decided.

Mr. RYAN.—I am just leading up to a point. The Country party acted inconsistently. Honorable members on this

side who represent country constituencies voted consistently on both occasions; they supported the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition and that which emanated from the Country party, because they realized that the interests of the primary producer and the consumer are identical. That was illustrated by the votes cast by the honorable members for Werriwa (Mr. Lazzarini), Gwydir (Mr. Cunningham), Angas (Mr. Gabb), Hume (Mr. Parker Moloney) and Calare (Mr. Lavelle), and those gentlemen were supported by representatives of industrial centres, whether they were sent here by waterside workers, miners or shearers. A practical demonstration was given to the people of Australia that this party stands on a platform which comprises the interests of the producers and consumers alike, and eliminates the middleman. This matter must eventually be fought out in the constituencies. I have not much faith in our friends in the corner, I have never had, and I have not much faith in any alteration that would take place if they were given the opportunity of assuming the reins of government. I am influenced by no personal feeling towards any one in casting my vote. I vote, not against the Prime Minister, but against the Nationalist party he is leading, which stands for and is supported and put in by the profiteers. I draw attention to this in order to make my position clear to the constituencies, where eventually the fight must be fought out. The only good that I can see that would obviously be derived by removing the present Government from office, is that we may have an opportunity of looking through the pigeon-holes, because there will be no proper investigation or disclosure until we have another set of Ministers in charge of the Treasury bench. That is one of the main reasons why I supported the amendment of the honorable member for Franklin (Mr. McWilliams), and why I think a change of Government ought to be brought about or a new election held. No one on this side is frightened of an election. Until there is a different set of Ministers in office, the people of Australia will not have a proper disclosure of the situation; we shall have no explanation in regard to the shipbuilding contracts or the amount of money lost on each, and there will be no proper explanation with regard to the wool transaction. Is there any honorable member in this House—

I do not think there is—who knows what the situation is with regard to the sales of wool that have already been effected? The other day the Prime Minister, when telling the House that Cabinet had asked the Treasurer (Mr. Watt) to go to London, said—

The Treasurer has further been commissioned to go thoroughly into the question of the profit on wool, out of which Australian growers have every right to expect a large bonus above the flat rate provided in the wool contract.

I shall not allow this Bill to pass without making my protest and insisting, as far as I can, on a full and proper disclosure being made in regard to that contract. Where are the cablegrams that are alleged to constitute it? Will some Minister make a definite statement as to what the wool-growers of Australia are to get? We are told they are to get half the profits to be made by the Imperial Government, but I doubt whether it is the Imperial Government and not some huge private profiteers in Great Britain that has made profits. I have great confidence in the manner in which the British Government, as a Government, will deal with the overseas Dominions of the Empire, but I have a shrewd idea that the profits on the wool sales have gone to private individuals in Great Britain.

Mr. FOWLER.—Does the honorable member not think it possible that they may have been shared by some individuals in Australia also?

Mr. RYAN.—I have a shrewd idea that some persons in Australia were permitted to sell to their own representatives on the other side of the world, and thus, perhaps, shared in the profits. The people are looking for a full explanation of the whole transaction. They want to get down to definite facts. It is claimed that the information has already been given to them. If that is so, why is the Treasurer to be sent Home on a begging expedition to get a bonus, as it is called, for the wool-growers? There should be some definite way of explaining to the people what they may expect to get in return for their wool clip, but no such definite statement has been made. I want it now, because the wool-growers of Australia do not know what they are to expect. In my opinion, they may expect very little, if anything at all.

I wish now to refer to the expenditure that took place during the recent elections.

There is no doubt in the mind of any honorable member that the party now occupying the Treasury bench was returned to office as a result of a campaign of misrepresentation, largely assisted by the money provided by profiteers. In Australia we are reaching a stage where the power of money exceeds the power it has displayed in any previous period of our history. A statement made by Sir Charles Wade, a well-known Liberal of New South Wales, on his return from Great Britain, is largely applicable to Australia. He informed the *Sydney Morning Herald*—

That during the time he had been in England he had become greatly impressed by the power of monetary influence. Merit alone in the Old Country was practically useless unless supported by money, and so evident was this that many whose only asset was merit were leaving the country. Immense fortunes had been made during the war.

An identical state of affairs is fast making its appearance in Australia, and a good deal of the direct action that is complained of, and of the industrial unrest prevailing arises from the fact that the workers of Australia are having it driven home to them that, although we are supposed to enjoy free democratic institutions, the reins of government can be secured by the use of large sums of money and by the practice of doubtful methods. Unless our friends opposite and those who support them realize that they must discontinue this practice, then exactly to that extent will our parliamentary institutions become discredited, and the number of people outside who stand for direct action, and claim that Parliament is of no use, increase. One of the most objectionable methods employed during the electoral campaign was the use of a secret service known as the Commonwealth Police Force. I have no hesitation in saying that some members of that Force were used for political purposes as canvassers. The Prime Minister smiles when I say this. He evidently thinks it a great achievement; but I would like to know why this Force, born of the Warwick egg, was transferred to the control of the Attorney-General on the eve of the elections, how many persons constitute it, when and to what extent their numbers were increased, exactly what their duties are, where they are located, and whether there is any other secret service? I want

Mr. Ryan.

to know exactly the amount of money spent on the Commonwealth Police Force, and, generally, what necessity there is for its existence. These are matters in which the people of Australia are very much interested, and I am satisfied that honorable members of this House know that the circumstances do not justify any expenditure in this direction.

Mr. HUGHES.—Where does the honorable member find in the Bill any reference to the Commonwealth Police Force?

Mr. RYAN.—It is wrapped up in the schedule. The right honorable gentleman thinks that because he has the expenditure so wrapped up I will be unable to pick it out.

Mr. HUGHES.—I shall try to find out all about it while the honorable member continues.

Mr. RYAN.—The right honorable gentleman cannot deny that a very large amount of money is being spent on that secret service which no honorable member considers justified. At all events, it is not justified by public exigencies, no matter what the private exigencies of Ministers may be. I do not hesitate to say that some public money is being spent on a secret service which is mainly used for political purposes. I would like to know whether Ministers contend that the Bill does not cover some expenditure for the Commonwealth Police Force. Seeing that no Minister replies by interjection, I feel it is necessary for me to add certain words to the clause. This Supply Bill, I take it, covers all the Supply asked for by the Government.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—Is it based on the appropriation in respect of last year, or on the proposed appropriation in respect of the current financial year?

Mr. RYAN.—The honorable member heard the Prime Minister ask me, in reply to my inquiry, to show him where provision was made in the schedule for the payment of the Commonwealth Police. My complaint is that the expenditure is so wrapped up that it is difficult to identify it. It is spread over different departments so that honorable members may not be able to discover it.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—There is nothing in this Supply Bill relating to the Commonwealth police.

Mr. FENTON.—There must be. They must be paid.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The Opposition ask for informaton, and when it is supplied they immediately refuse to accept it.

Mr. RYAN.—How are the Commonwealth police paid?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I will give no information unless my word is taken.

Mr. RYAN.—I do not wish to doubt the right honorable gentleman's word—

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I was referring to the interjection of another honorable member of the Opposition.

Mr. RYAN.—If provision is not made in this Bill for the payment of the Commonwealth police, then there will be no harm in my amendment, which relates to that service. If there is nothing in the schedule to cover payments to the Commonwealth police, I should like to know under what authority they are paid. Is it not requisite to have parliamentary authority, or does the right honorable member suggest that some authority given on a previous occasion authorizes the payment of the Commonwealth police for an indefinite period?

Mr. J. H. CATTS.—Or do the profiteers pay them direct?

Mr. RYAN.—The honorable member makes a very pertinent suggestion. I move—

That the following words be added to the clause—"Provided that no moneys shall be issued or applied after the thirty-first day of March, One thousand nine hundred and twenty, for maintaining the secret service which is commonly known as 'The Commonwealth Police Force.'"

The amendment, if carried, will give the Government a fair opportunity—up to the 31st March next—to deal with the Commonwealth police force, and will have the effect of expressing the opinion of honorable members, that no further public expenditure in connexion with that secret service should be made.

Question—That the words proposed to be added be so added—put. The Committee divided.

Ayes	..	..	25
Noes	..	..	37
		1	—
Majority	..	..	12

AYES.

Anstey, F.
Blakeley, A.
Catts, J. H.
Considine, M. P.
Cunningham, L. L.
Fenton, J. E.
Francis, F. H.
Gabb, J. M.
Hill, W. C.
Lavelle, T. J.
Lazzarini, H. P.
Mahony, W. G.
Makin, N. J. O.

Maloney, Dr.
Mathews, J.
McDonald, C.
McWilliams, W. J.
Moloney, Parker
Nicholls, S. R.
Ryan, T. J.
Stewart, P. G.
Tudor, F. G.
West, J. E.
Tellers:
Page, James
Watkins, D.

NOES.

Atkinson, L.
Bayley, J. G.
Blundell, R. P.
Bowden, E. K.
Bruce, S. M.
Cameron, D. C.
Chapman, Austin
Cook, Sir Joseph
Cook, Robert
Corser, E. B. C.
Fleming, W. M.
Foster, Richard
Fowler, J. M.
Gibson, W. G.
Greene, W. M.
Groom, L. E.
Hay, A.
Hughes, W. M.
Jackson, D. S.

Jowett, E.
Kerby, E. T. J.
Lamond, Hector
Lister, J. H.
Mackay, G. H.
Marks, W. M.
Marr, C. W. C.
Maxwell, G. A.
Page, Dr. Earle
Poynton, A.
Prowse, J. H.
Rodgers, A. S.
Ryrie, Sir Granville
Smith, Laird
Wienholt, A.
Wise, G. H.
Tellers:
Bamford, F. W.
Story, W. H.

PAIRS.

Charlton, M.
Brennan, F.
Riley, E.
Mahon, H.

Livingston, J.
Watt, W. A.
Best, Sir Robert
Burchell, R. J.

Question so resolved in the negative.

Amendment negatived.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 3 (Sum available for the purposes set forth in the schedule).

Mr. RYAN (West Sydney) [11.57].—

Before this clause is carried, I desire to repeat my question as to the Commonwealth Police Force. It was definitely stated by the Minister for the Navy (Sir Joseph Cook) that no authority was sought under this Bill for moneys for the payment of that force. The statement was not very relevant to the discussion, because the amendment that I moved, if carried, would have had the effect of preventing the payment of the Commonwealth Police from any source, whether under this Bill or otherwise. I should like to know under what authority the Commonwealth Police are paid and what are their numbers.

Mr. HUGHES (Bendigo—Prime Minister and Attorney-General) [11.58].—When the honorable member first raised this question I told him that I would obtain the information sought by him, and while I was doing so he moved his amendment, and divided the Committee on it. I shall tell the Committee all I know in regard to the Commonwealth Police Force. So far as I have been able to gather, there are eight or ten—I would not say that there are more than nine—persons employed in investigation work, who, for want of another term, may be described as members of the Commonwealth Police Force. It is against this formidable and numerous body that the honorable member has been fulminating for some time. Apparently the Commonwealth is tottering on its firm base because of the machinations of this body, and the Treasury is depleted because of their emoluments. I have been out of the country for some time, and do not know very much about the force, but I was endeavouring to obtain the information sought by the honorable member when he rudely interrupted my laudable effort by proceeding to divide the Committee. But I may tell the honorable member that these men are engaged in connexion with investigation work, and they do for my Department and the Attorney-General's Department exactly the same kind of work that the Customs officials do for the Customs Department—neither more nor less. To call them police is to misuse language, for they are not police—

Mr. RYAN.—I quite agree with that.

Mr. HUGHES.—The honorable member asked for information. Their duties are to investigate matters with which they are entrusted from time to time. For example, they deal with cases of fraud in the Departments, and they have been used to investigate cases of disloyalty.

Several Opposition members interjecting,

Mr. HUGHES.—I am glad to see where the interjections come from—there the thing is written plainly, and we can see it. No one can say that during the past five years there have not been hotbeds of sedition and disloyalty in the country,

The honorable member for West Sydney (Mr. Ryan) tries to introduce many extraneous matters into the debate; and by way of rejoinder, I should like to say one word. The honorable member asked me what these eight or nine men are engaged in doing, and I have told him that, amongst other duties, they investigate cases of fraud or embezzlement in the Departments, and, in national matters, they investigate all cases of disloyalty, conspiracy against the State, movements by the Sinn Fein body, and so on. Will the honorable member, or any honorable member, say that Sinn Fein is an institution which is to be permitted to run its course in this country without any attempt on the part of the State to see that it does not aim a blow at the foundations of Empire, on which our security depends? I have said, or, if I have not, my colleagues, or some of them, have said, that for all practical purposes this so-called Commonwealth Police Force ceased to exist long ago. It was brought into existence to enforce Federal law, which was in danger of being wholly disregarded. In certain parts of Queensland in which the honorable member for West Sydney (Mr. Ryan) resided for a long while, the Federal law was disregarded to such an extent that the warrant of the Commonwealth did not run, and the State police force would not attempt to enforce it. If I require any proof of that, I can turn to the honorable member for Herbert (Mr. Bamford), who lived in the district where, for all practical purposes, law did not exist.

Mr. BAMFORD.—Hear, hear!

Mr. HUGHES.—If the information I am now giving is not correct, I shall, as soon as I get the correction, give it to the Committee. I am given to understand that there is no provision at all in the Bill in relation to these men, but if there is I shall find out in a few moments and state how much. In the Estimates there are items connected with this body: and on the Estimates the whole question can be discussed fairly and without prejudice on its merits. If there be an item in this Supply Bill for the payment of these men, I shall declare it to the House, and honorable members may then do as they please in regard to it. I have given all the information at my disposal, and if it is supplemented by statements from the

officials, honorable members shall be informed.

Mr. WEST (East Sydney) [12.5].—One has to be very cautious in dealing with finance matters, in view of the danger there is of creating panic. The other day the Treasurer (Mr. Watt) told us that he is going to England on Commonwealth business, and that one of his objects is to float a loan, or make some arrangement, for the repayment of some £8,000,000 odd to the British Government. It is our duty to preserve the financial stability and credit of Australia, and to show our ability to meet any ordinary call made upon us. We were told by the Treasurer that the Commonwealth is requested to pay this sum of £8,750,000 as soon as possible; and I think that the position can very easily be met. In my opinion there is no necessity for the Treasurer to go on the London money market in its present condition. Any one who is studious enough to watch the financial journals and the telegrams which appear daily in our own press must realize the anxiety and trouble which the financial genius of Great Britain is experiencing in the efforts to meet the war debts, without the Dominions making any heavy calls on the resources of the Old Country. I cannot understand why the Government did not immediately ask the advice of this House, or get authority while the late Parliament was sitting, to repay this money.

The **CHAIRMAN** (**Hon. J. M. Chanter**).—How does the honorable member propose to connect his remarks with the clause before the Committee?

Mr. WEST.—I am speaking of the finances of the Commonwealth, and I urge that this money ought to be paid on the credit of Australia, by warrant, under the hand of the Governor-General, instead of sending the Treasurer Home on this mission.

The **CHAIRMAN**.—The reference in the clause to the warrant applies to the specific sum before us, but has nothing to do with what the honorable member is dealing with now.

Mr. WEST.—I wished to deal with the matter before, but when I rose you, Mr. Chairman, failed to see me. I was thus debarred from the privilege of speaking, and I feel very much offended.

The **CHAIRMAN**.—The honorable member is not debarred from the privilege of speaking, because he will have another opportunity, though not on this clause.

Mr. FENTON (Maribyrnong) [12.11].—It seems remarkable that the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes), who originated the Commonwealth police as a sort of secret organization, is not in a position to give the Committee any information regarding it. I find that, instead of the few men referred to by the honorable gentleman, there are at least thirty-two officers of different grades in this body, who are paid a total sum of about £7,000 per annum. This Department has grown in the usual way—a few men were appointed for certain duties, and they soon gathered others around them. Thus new Departments multiply, and the expenses of the Government increase. In the central administration there is a director in connexion with this Investigation Branch at a salary of £750, and he has several clerks, an inspector, and two sub-inspectors. In New South Wales there is a sub-inspector at £372, a clerk at £198, an inspector at £180, and two detective-sergeants at £584.

Mr. ANSTEV.—I rise to a point of order. No provision is made in this Bill for these police, and, therefore, their organization cannot be discussed now. We have been told by the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) and the Minister for the Navy (Sir Joseph Cook) that there is no provision for this body in the Bill, and I should like to know whether that is so or not.

The **CHAIRMAN**.—I do not know what details are in the schedules, and until we reach them I am not in a position to say whether the honorable member for Maribyrnong (Mr. Fenton) is in order or not.

Mr. FENTON.—In Victoria there is an inspector in charge at £408 per annum, a clerk at £198, a detective-sergeant of the first class at £292, and one detective-sergeant of the third class at £256. In Queensland, in which State, it was said, the Commonwealth police originated, there is an inspector at £426, two clerks at £204, and £186 respectively, two detective-sergeants of the first class at £584, and two detective-sergeants of the third class at £511. In South Australia—a very peaceable State indeed—there is an inspector in charge at £408, with a clerk

at £186, and two detective-sergeants of the third class at £512. In Western Australia there is an inspector in charge at £408, a clerk at £186, and two detective-sergeants of the third class at £512. In Tasmania there is an inspector in charge at £300, and, under his control, one detective of the first class at £257. The total expenditure under this head, as I have said, is set down at £7,102 per annum. If we can exercise economy anywhere it is in connexion with this absolutely useless and extraneous body created by the Prime Minister simply to satisfy a whim. To expend between £6,000 and £7,000 per annum on the upkeep of an absolutely useless body of men is to scatter broadcast the taxpayers' money, which can be ill-spared at the present time. If these men are paid, not by the Commonwealth Government, but by private persons, that should be stated. They are under the control of the Commonwealth, and act according to the instructions of Commonwealth authorities. This country is infested with detectives and others who are engaged in seeking information solely for the purpose of damaging the parties opposed to the Nationalist party. This is a lasting disgrace to those who are responsible for it, and I do not know how Ministers and their supporters can ruthlessly, recklessly, and extravagantly vote this money and justify their action to their constituents.

Mr. GROOM.—You know that they are not voting it.

Mr. FENTON.—Of course, they are. What is the good of trying to hoodwink the members of the Committee? Every public servant and every man in public office is paid out of the amount covered by this Supply Bill. We have to go to the Estimates for special information regarding the allotment of the grant. I have shown the class of men employed. They are paid handsome salaries for doing nothing but work of a political nature. Those responsible for this state of things should be ignominiously "booted out" of their position, and a set of men placed there who will, in the expenditure of public money, perform their duties honestly. This is not the only item to which exception can be taken; there are many others which show that Ministers and their supporters, while mouthing economy, are spending money recklessly.

Mr. RYAN.—And keeping the truth from the Committee.

Mr. FENTON.—Some members may be silenced by a jocular remark of the Prime Minister, intended to hide deficiencies in administration, but the country will not be satisfied with a smile and a joke instead of explanations. There is a kind of economy which, no doubt, will be practised by the Government, which will not meet with my approval, because it will be levelled at the producers and at those who are doing the work of the Commonwealth. I believe that Ministers will seek to economize by discharging workmen, who are the best customers of the producers, and will keep in office men of high salaries who are doing political work. I protest stoutly against the cavalier fashion in which the Prime Minister has treated the Committee. Finance was the great issue of the election, and the chief matter that we have to deal with. Yet the Estimates are full of items which should be wiped out. I ask honorable members not to be influenced in their votes by the fact that an objection comes from this or that part of the chamber. If a proposal is right and just it should receive the support of honorable members generally. This party did not, because the Country party refused to support its censure amendment, refuse to support the amendment of the Country party. I know what it is for people to have to live on small incomes, and I am determined that we should, so far as we can, cut down our expenditure. I commend the honorable member for West Sydney (Mr. Ryan) for having brought this matter before the Committee. The establishment of the Commonwealth Police has been a sore point with many of us. The Commonwealth has at its command the services of the State police, including the detectives, and hitherto they have sufficed to prevent fraud. The services of the State police are still available to the Commonwealth, and there is no need for a special Commonwealth Force. On behalf of the many thousands of men and women who find it hard to make ends meet, and who are paying the bulk of the taxation for the rich people in the community, I protest against this. I appeal to members to act justly towards the taxpayers, even should it mean the displacing of the present Ministers.

Mr. JAMES PAGE (Maranoa) [12.21].—Can the Prime Minister make a statement of the intentions of the Government in regard to the control of metals? In my constituency there is a silver and lead mine, the manager of which has written, wishing me to ask the right honorable gentleman to extend to him the same conditions as have been extended to those controlling similar mines in Tasmania.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—Does he wish to have the export of his metals prohibited?

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—No. I understand that the exporting of metals from Tasmania is allowed, and I wish the Government to extend the same concession to the Silver Spur mine, in Queensland, as it has given to similar mines in Tasmania.

Mr. HUGHES (Bendigo—Prime Minister and Attorney-General) [12.23].—I am glad that the honorable member has asked the question. Recently a very strong deputation, representative of those interested in the silver and lead ores of Tasmania, waited on me, stating that they were under great disabilities because the Sulphide Corporation, the local treatment company, could not pay them the world's price for their ores, but could only make an advance against the metal that the ores might hereafter realize. They, therefore, asked for permission to export the ores. The Government considered the request carefully, as it raised a question of great importance to the country. The war showed the absolute necessity of control in respect of such products as lead, zinc, copper, and tin, because those metals are essential to national safety in times of crisis. Silver, of course, is specially valuable at the present time. It was necessary, therefore, to take steps to prevent the recurrence of the unfortunate state of things which existed prior to the war, when Germany had control of our metals. But unless we can assure the metal producers of this country a fair price for their products, they cannot continue their operations, no matter how they may wish to do so. If a handicap must be placed on the industry, it should be shared by the community at large. I, therefore, told the members of the deputation that, without prejudice to the future permanent policy of the Commonwealth, which in due season honorable members will have an ample opportunity to discuss, they could, for a period of six months at least, export their ores to all

but enemy countries. The honorable member for Maranoa asks for the same consideration for other States as has been given to Tasmania. I assume he does not speak merely for Queensland.

Mr. BURCHELL.—Western Australia needs consideration.

Mr. HUGHES.—I have no hesitation in saying that it was not my intention to restrict the concession to Tasmania. In considering the matter, the Cabinet determined that any concession given to one State must be given to all. Whatever privileges are accorded to the producers of silver and lead ores in Tasmania will be given to all producers of such ores throughout Australia. It is not advisable to stress publicly the limitations imposed upon exportation to certain quarters, but, except for those limitations, which apply, of course, to exportation from Tasmania as well as from the other States, there is no embargo on exportation. I shall be glad if the honorable member for Maranoa will convey to the manager of the Silver Spur mine the effect of my statement, to which the press, I have no doubt, will give the widest publicity. If any honorable member desires information that I have not given, and that I am able to supply, I shall be glad to supplement my statement.

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—Have instructions been issued to the officials in the different States to permit the exportation of the ore?

Mr. HUGHES.—That will be done. Since Friday last it has been the policy of the Government to treat silver and lead ores throughout Australia in the same way as such ores are treated in Tasmania, and I shall ask my colleague, the Minister for Trade and Customs, because of the doubt just expressed by the honorable member, to instruct his officials at the various ports to allow the exportation of these ores.

Mr. GREGORY (Dampier) [12.30].—Does the statement made by the Prime Minister relate to base metals generally? Difficulties have been experienced, and heavy expenses incurred, in connexion with the shipment of tin and copper, and there is equally as good a claim for consideration in respect of them as in respect of silver and lead. Will the freedom that is to be permitted to the silver-lead producers apply to the producers of base metals generally?

Mr. HUGHES (Bendigo—Prime Minister and Attorney-General) [12.31].—I have not given that point any consideration, but I hardly see how it can affect Western Australia, because, as the honorable member for Dampier knows, permission has been given the producers of base metals in that State to export their products. That was done on account of the remoteness of Western Australia from convenient treatment plants in Australia. No representations have been made to me in regard to copper, tin, and other base metals. So far as I know, there is no hardship throughout the rest of the continent on account of the existing restrictions. But if there is a hardship it is open to honorable members to make out a case, as the Tasmanian representatives did. I dealt with a specific case on its merits, and I am prepared to deal with any other case on its merits. The honorable member for Dampier must realize that we have spent much time and money in attempting to establish great industries in this country, and we shall have failed if we permit the metal trade to drift back into the channels in which it flowed before the war. We must have some regard for the interests of the Commonwealth. If any honorable member can point to any hardship imposed upon any group of producers of any base metal, other than galena or silver-lead ores of any kind, I shall be glad to hear their representations, and, if a case is made out, to grant the necessary relief.

Mr. GREGORY.—May I assume that the producers of tin and copper in Western Australia are free to ship their products away?

Mr. HUGHES.—On the spur of the moment I cannot recall what arrangements were made in regard to Western Australia. Whatever they were, they resulted from the representations by Western Australian members, and I assume they were satisfactory, because they were whatever were asked for at that time. So far as I know, there were no reservations.

Mr. BURCHELL.—There was the registration of contracts.

Mr. HUGHES.—There must be that. We must know to what countries the ores are being sent. The producers are at liberty to get the best bargain they can in

the markets of the world, but the policy of the Government and the Parliament in regard to trading with the late enemy has been declared quite publicly. If this Parliament wishes to alter that policy it must do so formally after a discussion of the whole matter. Until then the policy of the Government remains unchanged, and registration of contracts must continue. The producers may get the best price they can and export their products to any country except to enemy countries and one other place.

Mr. CONSIDINE (Barrier) [12.35].—

During the Prime Minister's absence in England I repeatedly asked the Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Watt) to lay on the table the ten years' contract between the lead and tin mining companies and the Imperial Government, and the reply I received was that it was against Imperial policy to make the contract public while the war was still in progress. Now that peace has been signed by the Imperial Government, I ask the Prime Minister if he is prepared to lay the contract on the table?

Mr. HUGHES (Bendigo—Prime Minister and Attorney-General) [12.36].—I understand that the honorable member is referring to the contract made as a result of the arrangements which were entered into by me in 1916. So far as the Commonwealth is concerned, there is no objection to the tabling of that paper. But it is not a contract made with us; it is made between the Imperial Government and certain companies. I know of no reason why it should be kept secret, and the Government will endeavour to get a copy and lay it on the table. If the contract were between the Commonwealth and some one else, the position would be different. But it is not, and I must obtain a copy of it from either the British authorities or the Zinc Producers Association. I shall endeavour to do that.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—The Prime Minister will understand that the miners of Broken Hill are very much concerned in that contract.

Mr. HUGHES.—It is a matter of very great importance, and the House and the country are entitled to the information. I shall endeavour to make a copy of the contract available.

Mr. GREGORY (Dampier) [12.38].— I shall endeavour to arrange, at a later date, a conference of many of the leading producers of base metals with the Prime Minister, so that their case may be put clearly before him. I do not care what the policy of the Government may be in regard to these matters—for I am sure I can secure sufficient parliamentary pressure to alter that—but if the Government wish to look at the question from the right stand-point, the persons whose interests must be first conserved are the producers, and not the owners of the treatment plants. I know that the Prime Minister was absent from Australia when this question arose, and it was difficult to bring to his knowledge the evils that had arisen. But I feel convinced that, if the honorable gentleman had realized the disaster and ruin that has fallen upon many owing to the drastic regulations made by the Government, he would have made much fuller inquiries in regard to the claims of the small producers than were made during his absence. These matters were dealt with in an autocratic method, that did not tend to assist either the Government or the country. The producers have never yet asked to be allowed to send their metals to enemy countries. They are prepared to fall in with any views held by the Government in that regard, but I believe I shall have the support of the whole Committee when I say that the first interest to be considered is that of the men who go into the back country and win wealth from the soil rather than that of those who own the treatment plants. Every honorable member of the House has received, I believe, a copy of the lengthy report made by Mr. Garland, Chairman of the Sydney Metal Exchange. That gentleman holds a big position in the mining world, and has had a great deal of experience. Therefore, his views are entitled to respect. I know that the tin-treatment plants in Sydney did not ask for the restrictions which the Government have imposed. I have with me the particulars of one small parcel of tin. At the time it was dealt with, tin was worth £280 per ton, and had the producer been able to send the tin oxide to America for treatment he would have received, including exchange, and after paying treatment charges, £87 per ton more than he

received through being obliged to send the ore to Sydney. The Sydney smelting companies will not treat the metal and then allow the producer to sell it abroad. They buy the oxide on the basis of its Australian value, and then export it to America, and get the benefit of the exchange which should go to the producer. I know that the Prime Minister has been sympathetic towards the producers lately, and I feel sure that when their case has been put fully before him it will be dealt with sympathetically. I am prepared to leave the matter at this stage, in the hope of arranging a deputation to the Prime Minister in the near future.

Mr. HUGHES (Bendigo—Prime Minister and Attorney-General) [12.43].— This is a matter of very great importance, especially to the producer. I shall not support a policy which, to use a colloquialism, will amount to "greasing the fat pig."

If honorable members lay before me the facts in regard to base metals, and show that the producer is under a grievous disability, I shall listen with a very sympathetic ear and grant such relief as I think it will be satisfactory to him.

I have now the information that was desired in regard to the Commonwealth Police, and I regret to say that they have suffered terrible casualties since I last spoke. They are now reduced to three. This document was placed in my hands a few moments ago. I do not know what has happened to them since. I was asked where the Commonwealth Police are stationed. Two of them are surrounding Brisbane, which is menaced, and the other is in Sydney. They have been engaged in inquiries in Commonwealth Departments into defalcations, &c., and passports of enemy aliens. Later I shall advise the Committee of any more recent communication from the front, and I trust that by the time I speak again we shall be able to write R.I.P. in respect of all of them.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY (Hume) [12.45].—When information in regard to the Commonwealth Police Force was first sought by the honorable member for West Sydney (Mr. Ryan), the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) said that the schedule to the Supply Bill now before honorable members contained no provision for that force, and subsequently,

when an amendment was threatened by the honorable member for West Sydney, in order to obviate it, the Minister for the Navy (Sir Joseph Cook) indorsed what the Prime Minister had said. After the division on the amendment had been taken, the Prime Minister returned to the chamber, and said that if the schedule did contain any provision for this force he would supply the necessary information. And now we find that there are three members of the Commonwealth Police Force. But the honorable member for Maribyrnong (Mr. Fenton) has discovered that the ordinary Estimates make provision for thirty-two members of the secret service, and as the schedule to this Supply Bill is based upon the ordinary Estimates, it must contain some reference to the Commonwealth Police Force, if only under the heading of Contingencies. I suppose the Prime Minister is treating this matter in this cavalier fashion because he is buoyed up by the result of the division taken last night. He knows he has the numbers with him and that he can spend what he likes and go on hiding all these things, because no notice will be taken of them. It was very interesting to hear his camouflaged statement as to the necessity for a Commonwealth secret service, on the ground that there have been disloyalists in the community, and that attempts have been made to undermine the Empire. During the last four years, any one who spoke against the Prime Minister or against the manner in which the affairs of the country were being administered by the Government, was accused of disloyalty.

We are asked to believe that the only reason for the existence of the Country party is to stop the wasteful extravagance we are experiencing in the country to-day; but last night, after threatening great things, they ran away from their amendment and their declared convictions. And now the Prime Minister naturally feels he has a further lease of life, realizing that when it comes to a crisis, such as was threatened last night, at least one member of the Country party will conveniently cross over and vote with the Ministry, and that even if the situation should become desperate, another honorable member will follow this ex-

Mr. Parker Moloney.

ample. That is my interpretation of what took place last night.

Mr. HILL.—It is an unfair interpretation.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—I would not accuse the honorable member for Echuca (Mr. Hill), the honorable member for Wimmera (Mr. Stewart), the honorable member for Franklin (Mr. McWilliams), or one or two other honorable members of the Country party, with whom I am well acquainted, of any desire but to stand up to their declared convictions; but what is the use of a party claiming to be a new party, and advertising itself, as it has done, if, when the crisis comes, and when it is possible something can be achieved in the direction of preventing a recurrence of those very things about which they complain, several of them cross the floor and vote with the Government, as happened last night, when the Ministry were faced with a critical situation?

The CHAIRMAN.—The honorable member is not in order in reflecting on a vote already given by the Committee.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—I understand that the Treasurer (Mr. Watt) is to leave for London very soon, and, according to the statement made by the Prime Minister in the chamber last week, he is to see the authorities on the other side of the world with regard to the wool contract. I want to have a word or two to say about this contract, because I understand that there is really no contract, and that the arrangement for the sale of the Australian wool clip was based on cable messages passing between the Imperial Government and the Commonwealth Government. I claim that, for the information of the House and the country generally, the contents of those messages should be published before the Treasurer leaves. Why is everything covered up? Why should not the country know the substance of the arrangement entered into by which Australia was to give up half of the profit realized by the re-sales of our wool overseas?

The CHAIRMAN.—The clause makes no reference to the matter which the honorable member is discussing.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—Other honorable members were allowed to touch on almost anything in speaking to this clause.

The CHAIRMAN.—The honorable member is incorrect. I called the honorable member for East Sydney (Mr. West) to order for the same reason.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—No objection was taken to the discussion of a matter affecting lead. I am dealing with a matter affecting wool, and I see no difference between the discussion of lead and the discussion of wool. With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I wish to point out that, notwithstanding the statements made by some members of the Country party and others, that our primary producers are perfectly satisfied with the arrangements made regarding the sale of wool to the Imperial Government, I claim there is much dissatisfaction among the wool-growers. It is true that the pastoralists were to get an appraised price, guaranteed to be 1s. 3½d. per lb., a better price than they had ever got in their lives previously, and it is said that they ought to be perfectly satisfied because their wool brought much more than that, and they are to get half of the profit secured from re-sales; but I represent quite as many wool-growers as any other honorable member does, and on their behalf I challenge the declaration of satisfaction that has been made as purporting to come from them. As a matter of fact, the Imperial authorities kept back 10 per cent. out of the appraised price of 1s. 3½d. in anticipation that the wool might not realize that amount, and that 10 per cent. was not paid over to the pastoralists until the full amount of the appraised price was realized.

Mr. PROWSE.—The honorable member is not stating the position correctly.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—I think my interpretation of the position is sufficiently accurate, but the fact that the wool realized a great deal more than the appraised price does not, in my opinion, justify the Imperial authorities in taking half of the profits secured on re-sales.

Mr. ATKINSON.—That was contained in the agreement of 1915.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—Does the honorable member know what the agreement was? The pastoralists were guaranteed an appraised price of 1s. 3½d. per lb.

The CHAIRMAN.—I must again ask the honorable member to defer his remarks upon this subject until the Committee is dealing with the schedule.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—Before the Treasurer leaves for London, I would

like to ask the Prime Minister to make available to honorable members the contents of the cablegrams which formed the basis of the arrangement for the sale of the Australian wool clip.

Mr. HUGHES.—The Treasurer does not propose to take the cablegrams with him. In any case, I made the agreement, and I am not going away.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—The Prime Minister informed the House that the Treasurer would see the Imperial authorities with reference to the re-sales of wool, and I want to know whether the Leader of the Government will take honorable members into his confidence. On what matter is the Treasurer to see the Imperial authorities?

Mr. HUGHES.—Ah!

Sitting suspended from 1 till 2.15 p.m.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—I seek this information in the interests of many of my own constituents, and it also concerns people in all parts of the Commonwealth. The Prime Minister, however, treats my question as he treated every other put to him this morning. He refuses to give us any information on the subject. He stated, on Friday last, that the Treasurer was going overseas—

The CHAIRMAN.—I must again point out that the honorable member is not in order in discussing that matter on the clause now before the Committee. He will be able to deal with it when we reach the division of the schedule relating to the Department of the Treasury.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—I am afraid that we shall not then be able to secure the information I desire, since the Treasurer will not be present this afternoon.

The CHAIRMAN.—The honorable member may also deal with it when the division of the schedule relating to the Prime Minister's Department is before the Committee.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—I bow to your ruling.

The honorable member for Wimmera (Mr. Stewart) proceeded, yesterday, to explain why he did not vote for the censure motion submitted by the Leader of the Opposition, by means of which we hoped to ascertain the facts relating to many wrongs done the primary producer. The honorable member, however, did not complete his statement.

The CHAIRMAN.—The honorable member is now proceeding to deal with a matter that has already been decided.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—The honorable member said that the reason why he did not vote for the censure motion moved by the Leader of the Labour party was that in the course of the election campaign I had declared that the Country party was but a wing of the National party.

Mr. STEWART.—That is not a fair statement of what I said.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—I refer the honorable member to *Hansard*. He must surely have had some greater reason for voting against that motion.

The CHAIRMAN.—Order!

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—In view of your ruling, sir, I shall not at this stage make further reference to the matter. Before we proceeded to divide on the amendment moved by the honorable member for West Sydney (Mr. Ryan), that no further provision be made for the payment of the Commonwealth Police Force, the Prime Minister informed the Committee that the schedule to the Bill contained no reference to the force. On his return to the chamber, after the division had taken place, he said that there was at one time a great number of men in the force, but that they had suffered severe casualties, and that their numbers were now reduced to three. I suppose it was after the last general election that their ranks were depleted. This goes to show that the members of this secret service were used for political purposes at the last elections.

Mr. J. H. CATTS.—They were political agents.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—Yes. Proof of that fact is contained in the statement made by the Prime Minister that their numbers are now reduced to three.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—There did not appear to be any of them in my electorate during the campaign.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—I suppose it was considered that the honorable gentleman could look after himself. The Prime Minister's statement, that since the last general election their numbers have been reduced to three shows clearly—

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—He did not say that; that is the honorable member's own statement.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—So far as my memory serves me, the statement made by the Prime Minister was that he found that the Commonwealth Police Force had suffered great casualties, and that it now comprised only three.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—But he did not say that they had suffered great casualties since the last general election.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—No, and I would not expect him to make any such admission. It is, however, a reasonable deduction to draw from his statement. Now that the general election is over and they have done their underhand work, there is not so much need for these men, and their numbers have been reduced to three.

Mr. RYAN.—They are now called by a different name.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—No doubt they are still in the service of the Commonwealth. I am satisfied they are provided for in the schedule to this Bill under the heading of "Contingencies." Several members of the Country party who stand for economy say that they voted against the amendment moved by the honorable member for West Sydney because they accepted the Prime Minister's word that the schedule contained no reference to Commonwealth Police. Now that the right honorable gentleman has intimated that three members of that force have still to be provided for, there can be no misunderstanding, and as every man who stands for this country wants to get rid of this secret service, I shall test the feeling of the Committee by moving a further amendment.

Mr. RYAN.—They were employed to put down "rebels"!

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—And every man who does not support the Nationalist cause will be adjudged guilty of participating in a rebellion. Now that there can be no misunderstanding, I move as an amendment—

That the following words be added to the clause:—"Provided that no sum shall be available to satisfy payments towards the upkeep of what is known as the Commonwealth Police Force after April 30, 1920."

The CHAIRMAN.—I have to rule the amendment out of order, since the question involved has already been decided on the amendment moved by the honorable member for West Sydney (Mr. Ryan).

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—I would point out, sir, that the specific date mentioned in the amendment moved by the honorable member for West Sydney was the 30th March, whereas in my amendment I have proposed that no payments shall be made after the 30th April.

The CHAIRMAN.—I have to rule that the amendment is practically the same as that already dealt with by the Committee. If the honorable member desires to dissent from my ruling he will please hand in his dissent in writing.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—It is with regret that I shall take that course. I feel bound to do so, because I do not think I am getting fair play. My amendment, I submit, is entirely different from that proposed on another clause by the honorable member for West Sydney.

Motion of dissent submitted in writing.

The CHAIRMAN.—The honorable member for Hume (Mr. Parker Moloney) has moved that my ruling be dissented from, in the following terms:—

I move that the ruling of the Chairman be dissented from, on the ground that the amendment moved by me on clause 3 of the Bill differs from the amendment moved by the honorable member for West Sydney (Mr. Ryan).

The amendment moved by the honorable member for West Sydney (Mr. Ryan) was—

Provided that no moneys shall be used or applied after the 31st day of March, 1920, for maintaining the secret service, which is commonly known as the "Commonwealth Police Force."

The amendment moved by the honorable member for Hume (Mr. Parker Moloney) reads—

Provided that no sum shall be available to satisfy payments towards the upkeep of what is known as the Commonwealth Police Force after 30th April, 1920.

The Committee will see that the only difference between the two proposals is in the actual dates, and that the principle and essence of each is that no money shall be made available. I have given a ruling that the amendment proposed by the honorable member for Hume (Mr. Parker

Moloney) is essentially the same as the one proposed by the honorable member for West Sydney (Mr. Ryan), on which the Committee has deliberated and decided. I rule, therefore, that the amendment of the honorable member for Hume is not in order. It is now for the Committee to determine whether I am in error or otherwise. The question is that my ruling be dissented from.

Mr. RYAN.—Under ordinary circumstances I am reluctant to support any motion that the ruling of the Chair be disagreed with. I am bound, however, to support the motion on this occasion, because I think that the honorable member for Hume (Mr. Parker Moloney) is obviously right in submitting it.

The CHAIRMAN.—Will the honorable member permit me for one moment? It is within the province of the Committee to say whether there shall or shall not be a debate on this motion. Standing order 228 is as follows:—

If any objection is taken to a ruling or decision of the Chairman of Committees, such objection shall be stated at once in writing, and may forthwith be decided by the Committee; and the proceedings shall then be resumed where they were interrupted.

It is for the Committee to say now whether this motion is to be debated, or forthwith decided.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The standing order does not say that the Committee has to decide the point. The standing order is clear.

Mr. TUDOR.—It says, "may forthwith be decided."

Mr. RYAN.—Do I understand, Mr. Chairman, that you do not allow me to address myself to the question?

The CHAIRMAN.—Not without the special permission of the Committee.

Mr. J. H. CATTS.—I desire to move that leave be granted to the honorable member for West Sydney (Mr. Ryan) to discuss the question.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The difficulty can be got over only by suspending the Standing Orders.

Mr. J. H. CATTS.—I understand from the Chairman that it is in the discretion of the Committee whether the motion be debated, and, in accordance with that ruling, I desire to move that leave be granted to the honorable member for West Sydney (Mr. Ryan) to discuss it.

Mr. TUDOR.—The Chairman says that the matter has to be decided by the Committee, and I think he is right.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I submit that no such motion as that mentioned by the honorable member for Cook (Mr. J. H. Catts) can be entertained. The provision in the standing order is clear; the question has to be submitted "forthwith," and there can be no debate at this stage. I submit that it does not lie in the discretion of the Chairman to permit any debate now. There is nothing in the standing order to provide that anybody may do anything at this stage to prevent the Chairman putting the motion forthwith as to agreement or disagreement with his ruling.

Mr. TUDOR.—The standing order is absolutely clear. It does not say that the vote shall be taken forthwith; what it says is that the objection "shall be stated at once in writing, and may forthwith be decided by the Committee." What is the alternative? It is that the question shall be debated whether the Chairman is right or wrong in his ruling. Personally, I am in favour of the vote being taken forthwith, but it is within the province of any honorable member to discuss the motion.

The CHAIRMAN.—In order that the Committee may determine the matter, I rule that the question must be put forthwith.

Mr. RYAN.—May I draw your attention, Mr. Chairman, to page 71 of the Standing Orders, where we find set out the motions that are not open to debate?

The CHAIRMAN.—That does not apply to the present circumstances?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The alternative to "forthwith," is an appeal to Mr. Speaker.

Question.—That the Chairman's ruling be dissented from—put. The Committee divided.

Ayes	21
Noes	43

Majority	22
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AYES.

Anstey, F.	Mathews, J.
Blakeley, A.	McDonald, C.
Catts, J. H.	Moloney, Parker
Considine, M. P.	Nicholls, S. R.
Cunningham, L. L.	Ryan, T. J.
Gabb, J. M.	Tudor, F. G.
Lavelle, T. J.	Watkins, D.
Lazzarini, H. P.	West, J. E.
Mahon, H.	<i>Tellers:</i>
Mahoney, W. G.	Fenton, J. E.
Makin, N. J. O.	Page, James

NOES.

Atkinson, L.	Hill, W. C.
Bamford, F. W.	Hughes, W. M.
Bayley, J. G.	Jowett, E.
Best, Sir Robert	Kerby, E. T. J.
Blundell, R. P.	Lamond, Hector
Bowden, E. K.	Lister, J. H.
Bruce, S. M.	Mackay, G. H.
Cameron, D. C.	Marks, W. M.
Chapman, Austin	Marr, C. W. C.
Cook, Sir Joseph	Maxwell, G. A.
Cook, Robert	Page, Dr. Earle
Corser, E. B. C.	Poynton, A.
Fleming, W. M.	Prowse, J. H.
Foster, Richard	Rodgers, A. S.
Fowler, J. M.	Ryrie, Sir Granville
Francis, F. H.	Smith, Laird
Gibson, W. G.	Stewart, P. G.
Greene, W. M.	Wienholt, A.
Groom, L. E.	Wise, G. H.
Gregory, H.	<i>Tellers:</i>
Hay, A.	Burchell, R. J.
Higgs, W. G.	Story, W. H.

Question so resolved in the negative.

Motion negatived.

Mr. J. H. CATTS (Cook) [2.47].—

We were informed by the speech of the Governor-General that it is intended to appoint a Royal Commission to investigate the incidence of taxation. I understand that the Commission is to be appointed almost immediately. Apparently, its expenses will be met out of the Treasurer's Advance, which is provided for in this clause, and I wish, therefore, to take the opportunity to mention a few facts which indicate the existence of some kind of conspiracy to alter the basis of our taxation by placing on the masses of the people taxes which now are borne by the wealthy.

The CHAIRMAN.—The honorable member may not refer to that matter now; he must wait until the schedule is under discussion.

Mr. J. H. CATTS.—That really deprives me of my opportunity as our time is limited to 4 o'clock, and there will be no time for discussion of the items of the schedule. The clause provides that the Supply which we are granting shall be available to satisfy the warrants under the hand of the Governor-General in respect of any purposes and services set forth in the schedule.

The CHAIRMAN.—The honorable member will have his opportunity to discuss the matter to which he refers when we get to the schedule.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 4 agreed to.

Schedule—

THE PARLIAMENT.

Proposed vote (*The Parliament*),
£7,690.

MR. BLAKELEY (Darling) [2.52].—It is not my intention to speak at great length, because of the arrangement to finish with the Bill by 4 o'clock; but I desire to refer again to the wages and salaries paid to some of those employed in and about this institution. Honorable members have accepted the assurance of the Speaker that there is no sweating of the employees engaged in serving the Senate or the House of Representatives, and I accept his assurance that no one directly under his control receives less than £3 per week. There are, however, employees in the building getting under £2 10s. per week; and I have been informed, though I do not vouch for the accuracy of the statement, that recently a married man employed in connexion with this institution was getting only £2 4s. per week, and that when he died, leaving a wife and children, a "tarpaulin muster" had to be made by his mates to bury him. It has only been when the Speaker or the Joint House Committee has been forced by the awards of the Courts that increases have been given in the parliamentary service, and I maintain again that this is a sweating institution, and that there are men employed in it who are receiving under £2 15s. per week, although the living wage is £3 17s. per week. As a protest against this I move—

That the proposed vote be reduced by the sum of £1.

MR. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON (Lang) [2.55].—I was not present when the honorable member for Darling began his speech, and, therefore, did not hear all he said in regard to the wages paid to the employees of the House and the conditions under which they carried on their work. But I would draw the attention of the Committee to the fact that it has only been when I have been in occupancy of the chair that increases have been made in the salaries of the attendants, messengers, door-keepers, and cleaners of this House. During the long period that my predecessors occupied the Speaker's chair, there was no raising of the salaries of these men, and no complaint of their underpayment was then heard from any

of the honorable members who are now interesting themselves regarding the wages and conditions of employment of those in the service of the House.

MR. FENTON.—Simply because we were not aware of the conditions, which we would not have tolerated.

MR. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—It is a strange thing that during all the years that my predecessors occupied the Speaker's chair these honorable gentlemen did not trouble themselves in the slightest degree about the wages and conditions of those in the service of the House. Those wages and conditions are better now than they were under any of my predecessors. Honorable members appear to be under a misapprehension regarding the facts. So far as the departments under the Speaker's control are concerned, the statements made are not correct. They may have in mind the cases of attendants in some portion of the building over which the Speaker has no jurisdiction.

MR. BLAKELEY.—I spoke of persons connected with this institution; I do not know whether you control them or not.

MR. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—I am referring more particularly to the remarks made by the honorable member on a previous occasion.

MR. BLAKELEY.—Why not confine your remarks to the charges made to-day?

MR. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—They arise out of the same set of circumstances. No messenger in that part of the building over which the Speaker has control receives less than £168 per annum, which, when the bonus is added, makes it £183. The statement that there are messengers in attendance on this Chamber who are getting less than £3 per week is not correct. There are male cleaners getting £158, without the £15 bonus.

MR. MATHEWS.—No man can live on less than £3 per week.

MR. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—There were men here who lived on less before I was elected to the Speaker's chair. I have here a list of the salaries and of the names of the men under my control. In 1913, when I was first elected to the Speaker's chair, an increase of salaries of attendants was made, and the rates now paid range from £158 per annum, which is the lowest, to £265, which is paid to the housekeeper. Together with

the President I have been instrumental in getting the Treasurer to pay a bonus in lieu of an increase of salary to the attendants of the House to meet the conditions which have been brought about by the increase in the cost of living. Last year the bonus given was £10, and this year it was £15.

Mr. MATHEWS.—Not 3s. a week!

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—It is twice that, and is more than was ever done for the men before. Yet during the terms of my predecessors in office the question of salaries was never raised in this House. Honorable members who are now seemingly anxious for the welfare of the employees, when conditions are greatly better than they were under my predecessors, did not display any interest in the matter before I was elected to the chair. I draw attention to this aspect of the matter more particularly because during the recent election campaign untrue statements on the subject were circulated by certain persons in my electorate with a view to damaging my chance of election. That is the reason why, when I heard it stated in the House that messengers employed about the building were paid less than was received by employees of the same class in the Commonwealth Departments and in State Parliaments, I went to the trouble of obtaining information from both the Departments and the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly of Victoria. I have here a comparative statement which I have not time to read, but which shows clearly that the attendants in this House, so far from being paid lower wages, are being paid a higher wage than is received by those rendering similar service in Government Departments and the Victorian Parliament. In the latter, no cleaners are employed; all the cleaning work is done by the messengers or door-keepers, in addition to their other work, for a less rate than the employees of this House are receiving. I do not say that the remuneration paid to the employees in this building is sufficient if the cost of living is going to remain at an abnormal level. I do not believe it is, but I do say that attempts to make political capital out of the matter will not help me to improve the conditions. On the contrary, it makes my task more difficult than it otherwise would be.

Mr. J. H. CATTS.—That does not do you credit.

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—It does not do credit to those who would try to make political capital out of a matter of this kind. Before this question was taken up by honorable members in this House, and quite independently of anything done by them, it was receiving the close consideration of the President and myself. This attempt to interfere with the Speaker in the discharge of the functions which properly belong to him, is not, in my judgment, in the best interest of the men concerned. The whole question of salaries is at present the subject of conference between the President and myself, and honorable members would be well advised to allow the matter to remain in abeyance for the time being.

Mr. WEST.—And allow the employees to starve while you meditate.

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—There is another instance of gross misrepresentation. There is no question of starvation. As a matter of fact, I have done my best to supplement the earnings of the employees of the House by means of a bonus, which is another way of adding to the salaries they receive. For some time the whole question has been under review, and my own sympathies are with the men in their desire for a more liberal rate of remuneration, which the increasingly high cost of living fully justifies. The President and I have tried, as I have said, to meet the case to some extent by the payment of the bonus, and also by insisting that in connexion with any functions that take place in the House the messengers and other servants in the building should be given the first offer of employment and receive extra payment for their services. This has been done.

In regard to the allegation of sweating, no instance of the kind has been brought to my notice. The only sweating of which I have knowledge is that for which honorable members themselves are responsible by prolonging the sittings of the House, which means that members, as well as the employees, are sweated through actions of the House over which I have no control.

Mr. TUDOR.—When the honorable member for Lang was on this side of the House he took part in more all-night sittings than any one else, and was mainly responsible for them.

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—I readily plead guilty, but I also urge that there were extenuating circumstances. I have many times regretted since that I did not then realize the hardship it entailed on others. There is something in the contention that when the messengers are required to remain in attendance on honorable members all night they should receive extra payment. I am in sympathy with the idea that the remuneration should be increased, in view of the abnormal conditions existing, and I am doing my best to bring about that result. I hope that when the next Estimates are prepared they will disclose a more satisfactory scale of remuneration for the lower paid employees of the House. I repudiate the suggestion that I am in any degree responsible for sweating. On the contrary, my instructions to the officers have been that the staff should be compensated for extra duties by additional time off. In fact, I have directed that they be allowed as much time off as possible, consistently with carrying on the ordinary duties of the House, so that members will not be inconvenienced. In this way a considerable addition has been made to the ordinary holidays of the staff. Honorable members can assist me materially in removing any cause for a charge of sweating by combining in a firm resolve to conserve their own health, as well as that of the attendants, by concluding the business of the House within reasonable hours. If honorable members will leave this matter in the hands of the President and myself, they may rely upon it being sympathetically considered.

Mr. BRENNAN.—What minimum wage will the honorable member promise?

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—I do not desire to go into details in regard to that matter. Both Houses of Parliament must be co-ordinated to some extent, and I can say nothing definite at present.

Mr. J. H. CATTS (Cook) [3.10].—In view of the remarks of the honorable member for Lang (Mr. W. Elliot Johnson), some of which were certainly in very questionable taste, I feel obliged to say a few words on this matter. The honorable member suggested that the under-payment of employees of the House was used against him in his electorate. I challenge him to name one

member of the House who referred to this matter in the Lang electorate.

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—I did not say that members of the House had done so.

Mr. J. H. CATTS.—I am glad to have that assurance, because I know that no member of the House did deal with this matter in the honorable member's electorate. Possibly some person who had read *Hansard* made reference to it; but there is no foundation for the suggestion that political capital was made out of it by honorable members on this side.

The honorable gentleman said also that the action of honorable members in bringing this question before the House would prejudice the chances of the employees getting fair treatment. That is a most unfair remark. It is beyond question that men are being employed about the House at less than the standard living wage; and it is a reproach to every honorable member that we should have men in personal attendance on us under those conditions. That fact constitutes a grave reflection on every one of us; it is not the particular responsibility of Mr. Speaker. He, in his administrative capacity, is merely an officer of the House, and his duty is to carry out the wishes of the House. I cannot believe that the Treasurer or anybody associated with the Administration would hesitate to make provisions for the adequate payment of men who are in personal attendance on honorable members. The honorable gentleman exceeded the limits of both duty and good taste in assuming the right to tell us whether we should sit early or late. The question of when we shall transact the public business is a matter for the House to decide; whether we sit early or late, or the round of the clock, proper attendance must be provided; and whatever financial responsibility results therefrom must be arranged by the Government.

I take the strongest exception to the imputation that, because honorable members object to men who are engaged in rendering personal service to them being paid a sweating rate—and anything less than the recognised standard wage of £3 17s. 6d. per week for a married man is a sweating rate—their chances of receiving justice will be prejudiced.

Mr. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—It does not prejudice their chances so far as I am concerned.

Mr. J. H. CATTS.—I am glad to hear that, and I am sorry if I misunderstood the honorable member, but we should know where the prejudice arises.

Mr. BRENNAN (Batman) [3.13].—If this matter were before the Committee for the first time we might, perhaps, have cheerfully accepted the undertaking by the Speaker that the evil would be redressed. But I have a very vivid recollection that the same matter came up for discussion in the House, over which the present Speaker presided, during the last session of last Parliament, and that he, on that occasion, as he did to-day, promised that he would take the question in hand, and remove the scandalous condition of affairs about which complaints were being made. I do not think that we should now accept a mere promise on the part of the Speaker that he will look into this matter, or the assurance that he is engaged in conference about it. If to-day he had told us that the conditions now prevailing would terminate to-day or to-morrow, I would be prepared to accept his assurance. But when he comes here, and tells us that he is negotiating about the matter and considering it, and says that it might well be left in his hands, it is very little less than an insult to the intelligence of honorable members. I venture to say that we should set an example rather than slavishly seek to find out what is a minimum wage that we may decently pay our attendants. I hope that the amendment will be persisted in, and that those honorable members who are committed to a policy of economy will not find it inconsistent with their principles to see that men, adults and responsible for families, engaged as workers in this House receive at least a fair remuneration. Everywhere outside wages are advancing in some sort of relation to the increased cost of living. Here only do they appear to be standing at a minimum which does us no credit. It is said that the matter is under consideration, and that we ought to leave it with Mr. Speaker. He complains that political capital was made out of it at the last election. That is very likely. If I had had it brought specifically under my notice

in the electorate of Lang, and it was proved to my satisfaction that men employed in the service of Parliament were being underpaid, I would have thought it a very legitimate kind of political warfare in which to indulge, and a very right and proper matter to bring before the attention of the constituents of the honorable the Speaker. It would be a much more legitimate kind of warfare than that which was indulged in by some members of the Nationalist party during the recent election. However, I intend to support the amendment, sincerely hoping that it will receive such a measure of sympathy from all honorable members that here and now this disgraceful condition of affairs will be brought to an end.

Sir JOSEPH COOK (Parramatta—Minister for the Navy) [3.18].—I sympathize with the proposal to make a little more liberal the salaries paid to officers of this House. My own impression is that they are not too well paid. A few years ago when I was Prime Minister I interested myself in the matter, and brought under the notice of Mr. Speaker at that time the condition of the officers engaged in the service of this House, but I did not raise the question in the Chamber or attempt what honorable members are now proposing, to bring about a reduction of the Estimates for the purpose of securing an increase in them. Honorable members are not proceeding in the right way. Last night they voted *en bloc* with the gentlemen in the Chamber who were concerned with effecting economy, and their very first action after getting clear of that vote is to raise the question as to whether more money should not be spent by the House. After all, these matters are the joint concern of both Houses—

Mr. McDONALD.—They are not joint. Each House controls its own business.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—There is some sort of co-ordination between the two controls. I think we ought to treat our own officers fairly liberally, and I very earnestly suggest to Mr. Speaker that the matter should be reviewed. I heard to-day that the head messenger, Mr. Mitchell, who has upon his shoulders the sole responsibility for this building, and the control of its upkeep, is paid a bare daily wage. It does not seem quite the thing. However much we may discuss economy,

it is up to us to see that at least in this Parliament we do not sweat our own servants. I know there are difficulties surrounding the question—

Mr. WEST.—There is no difficulty at all. The Treasurer could deal with the matter within twenty-four hours.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Of course, I bow to the knowledge of the financial authority in the Chamber. I suggest to the honorable member who moved the amendment that in the circumstances he should withdraw it, leaving it to Mr. Speaker to review the whole question when considering the next Estimates.

Mr. BRENNAN.—Mr. Speaker has given us no promise that he will do anything definite.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The honorable member should not put the Presiding Officer of this House in the position of bargaining on the floor of the House. The course I have suggested will, in the long run, be found to be more in keeping with our dignity, and will best effect the object we all in common have in view. I join with honorable members in asking Mr. Speaker respectfully to review the salaries paid to officers of the House, with a view to having them placed on the footing of persons outside in relation to such increases as have been given generally since last we discussed this matter. I am sure that such an appeal coming from both sides of the House will have the desired effect.

Mr. FENTON (Maribyrnong) [3.23].—I do not know whether I would be in order in doing so, but I would like to ask the honorable member for Lang (the Hon. W. Elliot Johnson) whether I understood him to say that the whole matter was being reviewed at the present time, with a view to placing a certain sum on the Estimates for next year.

The Hon. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—Yes; the matter has been under review for some time.

Mr. FENTON.—I would be quite satisfied to see the amendment withdrawn if our ends can be gained without a division, but the honorable member for Darling (Mr. Blakeley), who moved the amendment, is unavoidably absent from the chamber, and before leaving he asked honorable members to be sure to call for a division.

Mr. BRENNAN.—Do not worry; I propose to call for a division.

Mr. WEST (East Sydney) [3.26].—I would like to give the Minister for the Navy (Sir Joseph Cook) some instruction upon the duties he will carry out as Acting Treasurer, and point out how he will be able to overcome the present difficulty. He has advised us to wait until the next Estimates are before us, and if he will give the assurance that those Estimates will provide sufficient for the payment of extra salaries to the officers of the House for the present moment, I am quite willing to let this matter go without a division. He can provide the necessary money out of his Treasurer's Advance. Among the Parliamentary attendants is a returned soldier, who is paid £2 17s. 6d. a week, out of which he has to maintain his wife and five children, and rent a house close to the scene of his work. He has also to pay 2s. insurance to the Government. This man cannot make one collar serve for a couple of days. He must be presentably attired, and must wear a clean collar nearly every day. He must always wear a white shirt. In 1913, the time referred to by the right honorable member for Parramatta (Sir Joseph Cook), my wife, or the wife of any ordinary workman, could wash the whole of the household washing for 8d. a week, but to-day the material necessary for the same amount of household washing costs 3s. 6d. I could give further illustrations to show that this man is being penalized. To-day it costs him 6d. a week to keep his boots clean, whereas in 1913 it cost him 3d. to do so. To-day his tram fares, going to and from his work, cost 1s. 9d. per week as against 1s. per week in 1913. It costs him 7s. to-day to have his boots half-soled and heeled, whereas in 1913 the cost did not exceed 3s. 6d. Yet the Speaker makes a comparison between the wages paid to-day and those paid in 1913, when no complaint was raised. There is no comparison between the salaries paid in 1913 and those paid to-day. Perhaps the Minister for the Navy (Sir Joseph Cook) does not remember when he was working at Lithgow, and I endeavoured to have his wages raised by 2d. a ton on coal. In those days he was about as thick as a slate for the want of proper nourishment. If his

memory would go back to those days he would accept my advice in regard to what to do at the present time. If I were Acting Treasurer, I would take the money from the Treasurer's Advance Account for the payment of the increases to the officers of this House, and I am sure that when the Estimates came forward no honorable member would object when the circumstances of how it came to be done were related to them. It is of no use to try to mislead honorable members like myself, because I have a knowledge at least equal to that of any other person in the House of the wants and necessities of the class from which I sprang. I would urge Mr. Speaker to let us have no more of these vague statements, but to come boldly to the front and say either "I am in favour of an increase" or "I am not in favour of it." I am satisfied that these people are not being paid a living wage. Let honorable members think of the case of the individual who has to suffer. The next Estimates are not likely to be laid on the table of the House until August or September next at the earliest. What are these employees to do in the meantime? All of them are married men, and the cost of the necessities of themselves and their children is increasing as the cost of living rises, but they will have to stay at their present wage until the next Estimates are passed. Only the other day one of my married daughters told me that she had to pay 17s. 11d. for a pair of boots for a son eleven years of age, and they were the cheapest she could get. Another daughter found that the only decent pair of boots that she could buy for a child not more than three years old cost her 8s. 11d. Even then they were not of first-class workmanship. I presume that these servants of ours, like other married members of the community, have increases in their families. Each one of these makes a difference to the boot bill, and the longer justice is delayed to them in the way of salary the more possibilities there are of their little ones coming on and wanting boots. I speak strongly on this matter, because there is a principle underlying it. We, as legislators, have been told by commissions the minimum on which married men and their wives and children can live, as Australians. If we feel that wrongs of this kind are being done, let every individual member of the

Mr. West.

House have the courage to bring the facts before the authorities, if he cannot have them redressed by any other means. I have spoken to members of the Ministry privately about this matter for eighteen months, and nothing seems to be done. I do not want to secure lime-light out of a question of this kind; but when the necessity arises I shall not hesitate to draw public attention to what is going on. I believe that when honorable members ventilate these matters in Parliament those in authority pay more attention to them, because they do not like the facts to be brought before the general public. I think that Mr. Speaker would be consulting his own interests if he could expunge from the records all that he said to-day, because he certainly did not reach that high ideal of humanity that a representative man ought to aim at in any statement he makes about his fellow creatures. The illustrations which he gave from the past have nothing to do with the present needs of the Australian people. What was good when I was a boy is of no use now. I used to preach things when I was a young man of twenty standing on a tub in Hyde Park, London, that I would not say to-day. In those days myself and my fellow workmen used to sing—

Work, boys, work and be contented,
So long as you have enough to live.

The man who sings that to-day ought to be pushed into the river and never seen again. As members of Parliament we pass a law to compel private individuals to pay a minimum rate of wages, and yet we do not do it ourselves. When we bring that fact forward, those in authority say, "Oh, don't say that, because it does not sound very nice." That sort of appeal has no effect on me. I am glad this matter has come up, because the discussion should help to put a stop to what has been going on, so that those employed in this building may get what the people of Australia intended that the servants of Parliament should get. Does any honorable member believe that the public would tolerate for a moment a returned soldier with a wife and four children being paid only £2 17s. a week, and having to pay 2s. insurance out of it? If honorable members opposite think the people would not tolerate that state of things, let them impress upon the Treasurer that if

he does not do something to improve things they will vote against him at the next opportunity and push him out of his job. Unfortunately, honorable members on the other side cannot do that because the Prime Minister rules them and decides who shall be Ministers. If he sat on this side of the House, the first Caucus that met would want to know what the devil he was up to if there was anything wrong.

MR. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON (Lang) [3.38].—I wish to say a few words to clarify the position, and again to resent the statement that there is any male employee of this House, under the control of the Speaker, receiving a salary of less than £3 a week. I cannot understand the object of members in continuing to make misleading assertions where I have stated that no male employee of this House is receiving less than £158 a year.

MR. WEST.—That is too little.

MR. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—That is not the point. The statement has been made that some are getting less, and I say that that statement is not true, so far as this House is concerned. Some honorable members may have other things in their minds, and, therefore, do not make the position clear; but they certainly have conveyed to the minds of honorable members the impression that some of the attendants of this Chamber are in the position to which they have referred. I again say that that is not so. To avoid mistakes, I shall give a list, without mentioning names, of the salaries paid. The smallest salary is paid to temporary cleaners, and amounts to £158; when the bonus of £15 is added it brings the total salary to £173. That is the lowest. It is not £2 17s. a week, as honorable members have stated. It is considerably more than that—about £3 6s. 6d. Whether it is sufficient or otherwise is another question. One hundred and fifty-eight pounds is the lowest male wage on this side of the building.

MR. J. H. CATTS.—That is less than the living wage.

MR. W. ELLIOT JOHNSON.—It is the minimum at which the temporary cleaners are started. The next rate is £168, plus the bonus, which brings it up to £183, roughly £3 10s. per week. The

next is £200, the next £216, and the next and highest £265, which is the salary paid to the housekeeper, in addition to which he gets free quarters, fuel, light, and water. Apart altogether from the question of whether the payment is sufficient, I thought it well to put these figures before the Committee in order to refute the statement that attendants in this Chamber are receiving only £2 17s. 6d. per week. The whole question is now being reviewed by the President and myself. We had it under consideration prior to the dissolution, but did not arrive at finality because it was felt that the matter was one that should be left for the determination of the Presiding Officers of the new Parliament. As soon as it is convenient for the President and myself to renew the conference which was broken by the elections, we shall meet again and further discuss this matter.

I should like to point out one very serious omission from the present discussion. I am surprised that during the consideration of the question of underpayment some reference has not been made to the position of honorable members themselves. While giving attention to the grievances of every one else, they appear to be the last to consider their own disabilities. I have no hesitation in saying that the allowance received by honorable members, having regard to existing conditions, is wholly inadequate to meet the extra burdens of existing conditions. Something should be done, and that very soon, to remedy the situation, so that honorable members, in common with the people generally, may obtain further remuneration to meet the increasing calls upon them. By comparison many of the officers of the House are better paid. Some honorable members, at the end of the month, find themselves hard-pressed to make ends meet; yet they are the last to look after their own interests in this respect. I hope that if they are so diffident as to their own position, the Government themselves will consider the question, and realize that honorable members themselves have a real grievance. Even the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth with his enormous responsibilities gets paid a salary less than that of an efficient departmental manager of many a private concern.

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND (Illawarra) [3.43].—There does not seem to be now, nor has there been on any occasion, any wide difference of opinion amongst honorable members as to the inadequacy of the payments made to the parliamentary attendants. A point that has not yet been explained relates to the nature of the control of the staff of this House. It is practically the unanimous desire of the House that better treatment should be meted out to those in attendance upon honorable members; yet no one has indicated who is the authority to give effect to that desire. We were asked a few days ago to appoint to the Joint House Committee members of this House, presumably, to represent us upon it. An honorable member who had served on that Committee stated, however, that the Committee had no control over the conduct of the House—that it was controlled by some one who was not a member of the House of Representatives, and over whom the Committee had no authority. We are entitled to know who really does control this House, and why it is that the wishes of honorable members in respect of these and other matters do not receive the attention to which they are entitled. If the government of the House is such that effect cannot be given to the will of honorable members in respect of these matters, an alteration ought to be made. There should be some one to whom we can attach the blame for any failure to give effect to the expressed wishes of the House on these and kindred subjects. I should like to know whether it is true that Mr. Speaker has control of the staff of the House of Representatives, or whether the whole business relating to that control is under the direction of the Joint House Committee? If it is under the control of the Committee, we should see that those elected to it by this House do justice to the men whom we employ. To me, it is a disgrace that we should be setting an example different from that which we expect private employers to follow. It is not the wish of the House, and we should see that the officers responsible for the control of the House are made to understand that we expect them to control it, and not to allow the authority to do so to drift into the hands of any person beyond our control.

Amendment negatived.

Proposed vote agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN.—As the hour is late, is it the pleasure of the Committee that the remaining divisions be taken as a whole?

Mr. WEST.—I object.

Proposed vote (*Prime Minister's Department*), £20,090, agreed to.

Proposed vote (*Department of the Treasury*), £74,170.

Mr. WEST (East Sydney) [3.46].—I had intended earlier in the day to draw attention to the financial position of Australia, and to the indifference shown by the Government and their supporters to any attempt to solve the problems associated with it. As that would involve my speaking at length, I shall not do so to-day, but shall avail myself of another opportunity to deal with the whole question. I wish to bring under the notice of the Treasurer a couple of grievances relating to the Old-age Pensions Act. The first has to do with the treatment of a German under the Old-age Pensions Act. His case has been considered by a union in Sydney, of which he is a member, and has also been brought under the notice of the Returned Sailors and Soldiers Association. Both bodies have urged me to bring it before Parliament, since, under the Act as it stands, it would seem that the Department itself is powerless to grant the desired relief. The following letter, which was addressed to the Department, puts the position as briefly as possible:—

18 Raglan-street, Darlington, Sydney,
19th July, 1918.

Dear Sir,—I apologize for thus taking up your valuable time in a matter that is of great importance to me. I have been in receipt of the old-age pension from January, 1915, until June, 1918, when it was discontinued. The reason given to me at the Pensions Office in Sydney for the discontinuance was that, as I was naturalized after the outbreak of war, I could not receive it under regulations. I therefore desire to place the following facts before you, and crave your reasonable consideration of the matter. I, Moritz Carl Georg Hirsch, arrived in Brisbane on the 5th day of November, 1869, by the sailing ship *Humbold*, under Captain Meyer, my passage being paid by the Queensland Government. I was granted 40 acres of land. I remained in Queensland for three years, and then came to New South Wales, in which State I have continuously resided for forty-six years. I was honestly under the belief that, as I was brought out by the Queensland Government, I automatically

became naturalized, and was not aware of the contrary until I made application for the pension in 1915. I swear that I have always been, and still am, a loyal subject of the British Empire. I have always taken a keen interest in the affairs of my adopted country. I am well known to Superintendent Kelly, of the Metropolitan police, from whom any further information required as to my character could be got. As I am now in my eightieth year, and have on several occasions been unsuccessfully treated for hernia, I am quite unable to earn my own living. I have no relations whatsoever in the Commonwealth, and sincerely trust you will take a favorable view of my case, as the pension is my only means of livelihood.

P.S.—I received my naturalization certificate in January of 1915.

The union of which this man is a member allows him a certain sum per week, and I believe he also gets some assistance from the State. We cannot turn a man on to the streets to starve simply because he was born in a foreign country. This man has been forty-six years a resident of Australia, and, so far as I know, there is nothing against his character.

Mr. POYNTON.—Why did he not take out naturalization papers during those forty-six years?

Mr. WEST.—Because he came out under engagement to the Queensland Government and thought he was thus naturalized. It is easy to be wise after the event. He knows now that he should have become naturalized before. I am sure there is no desire to deprive him of his pension because of his remissness.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—We will look into the matter.

Mr. WEST.—I have another case of an old-age pensioner, Mr. W. J. Anderson, late of Avondale, Cooranbong, New South Wales. His case also requires consideration. He bought an annuity of £30, to become effective when he reached the age of seventy, but when he applied for the old-age pension, the Pensions authorities deduced the amount of his annuity from his pension rights. There might have been no objection to this course, but the authorities capitalized the annuity and deducted £5 18s. 2d., the amount by which his income exceeded £26. A further deduction was made in respect of the value of his accumulated property, so that his pension was payable at the rate of £20 11s. 10d. per annum. I do not think that the Parliament intended that individuals should be penalized in this way. The departmental officers, I understand, acted on

the advice of the Crown Law Department, and, no doubt, faulty draftsman-ship of the measure is responsible for this anomaly. I trust there will be some redress—perhaps, by an amendment of the Act—so as to remove this disability from old-age pensioners, who, in their earlier years, may have purchased an annuity. Unless this is done, all those who purchased annuities will be penalized. Here is a chance for members of the Country party to effect economy. If they can persuade 100 people to buy annuities, expenditure on account of old-age pensions will be correspondingly reduced. I know there is a general desire to finalize the Supply Bill, but I felt it my duty to bring these cases before the Committee, and I hope that something will be done.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I promise the honorable member that I shall look into the matter.

Proposed vote agreed to.

Remaining division agreed to; schedule agreed to.

Preamble and title agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment; report adopted.

Bill read a third time.

ADJOURNMENT.

ORDER OF BUSINESS.

Mr. HUGHES (Bendigo—Prime Minister and Attorney-General) [3.59].—In moving—

That the House do now adjourn.

I should like to say that I hope honorable members will be able to conclude their remarks on the Address-in-Reply on Wednesday evening next, as nearly everything that could be said in the debate has been said. There are many measures of first-class importance awaiting attention, including one which, I think, it is the desire of all sections of the House to see finalized, namely, the War Gratuity Bill. The Bill is ready, and the Government desire to go on with it; and, therefore, I hope that honorable members will conclude their remarks on the Address-in-Reply on Wednesday evening.

Mr. J. H. CATTS.—Why not advance the War Gratuity Bill a stage, so that honorable members may be able to see its provisions.

Mr. HUGHES.—Honorable members will see the Bill on Wednesday.

Mr. TUDOR (Yarra) [4.1].—The Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) has asked honorable members to conclude their remarks on the Address-in-Reply next Wednesday evening. I can remember, in the last Parliament, how the Prime Minister received the shock of his life when I did not debate the Address-in-Reply, and the motion was carried on the voices. Indeed, there was no man in the Commonwealth more annoyed at what I did than was the Prime Minister. I am not sure, however, whether I shall follow that example on this occasion, because, on other questions, no opportunity has been presented to me of saying a few words that I desire to say. I agree with the Prime Minister that the War Gratuity Bill is of first-class importance, and I know that many people throughout the Commonwealth are anxious to see it. There are many who are to receive advantages under it, while there are others who think that they ought to receive advantages. Some persons were prevented by the military authorities from going away from the Commonwealth, and they think they ought to be put in precisely the same position as returned soldiers. I agree with what was said by the Treasurer (Mr. Watt) the other day, to the effect that this is a Bill which, to use his own phrase, ought to be discussed in a "leisurely" way; there should be no attempt to rush it through until persons affected have an opportunity to thoroughly grasp its provisions.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—That is a reason for dealing with it early.

Mr. TUDOR.—That is so, and it is certainly no reason why it should be rushed through before those persons have an opportunity to state their cases to honorable members. I have in my mind representations which have been made to me by persons who were prevented from leaving Australia. I am not going to discuss the question now, but I think other honorable members may know of similar instances. When the second reading of the Bill has been moved, it is only right there should be an adjournment of the debate to afford honorable members an opportunity to study the details of the measure.

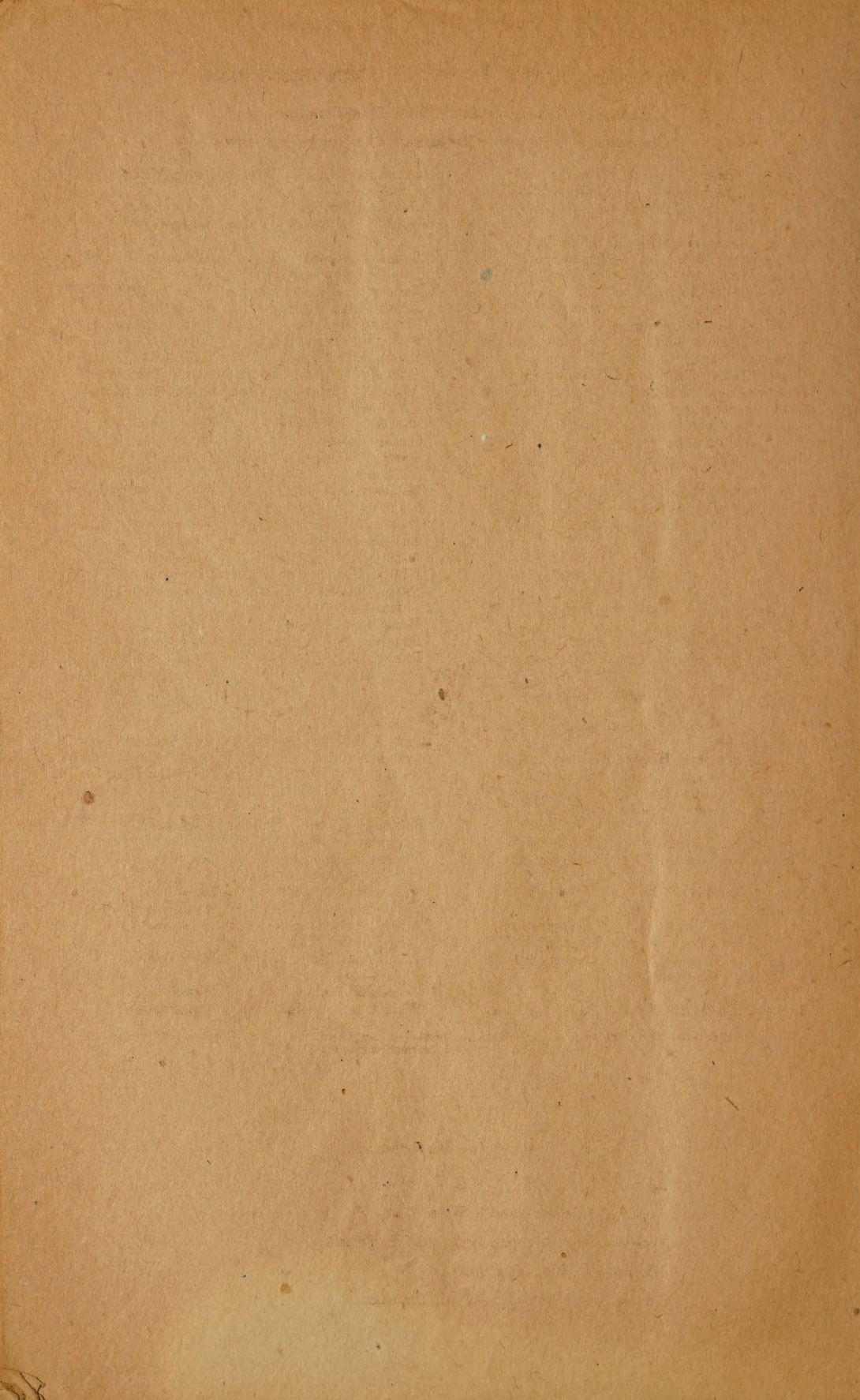
The honorable member for Darling (Mr. Blakeley) has asked me to ascertain from the Government whether they intend to adjourn over the Easter holidays, and if so, on what day they propose to adjourn, so that honorable members may be able to make their arrangements. Good Friday is three weeks to-day.

Mr. HUGHES.—In that week we could meet on the Tuesday instead of the Wednesday, and adjourn on the Thursday until the following Wednesday. If it is the desire of honorable members, the Government will make that arrangement.

Mr. TUDOR.—As to the debate on the Address-in-Reply I will not say that it will finish on Wednesday night, but it may finish early in the week.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

House adjourned at 4.5 p.m.



Members of the House of Representatives.

Speaker—The Honorable William Elliot Johnson.

Chairman of Committees—The Honorable John Moore Chanter.

Anstey, Frank ..	Bourke (V.)	Johnson, Hon. William Lang (N.S.W.)
* Atkinson, Llewelyn ..	Wilmot (T.)	Elliot
Bamford, Hon. Frederick	Herbert (Q.)	Jowett, Edmund ..
William		Grampians (V.)
Bayley, James Garfield ..	Oxley (Q.)	Kerby, Edwin Thomas
Bell, George John ..	Darwin (T.)	Ballarat (V.)
Best, Hon. Sir Robert	Kooyong (V.)	Lamond, Hector ..
Wallace, K.C.M.G.		Illawarra (N.S.W.)
Blakeley, Arthur ..	Darling (N.S.W.)	Lavelle, Thomas James ..
Blundell, Reginald Pole ..	Adelaide (S.A.)	Calare (N.S.W.)
Bowden, Eric Kendall ..	Nepean (N.S.W.)	Lazzarini, Hubert Peter ..
Brennan, Frank ..	Batman (V.)	Werriwa (N.S.W.)
Bruce, Stanley Melbourne	Flinders (V.)	Lister, John Henry ..
Burchell, Reginald John ..	Fremantle (W.A.)	Corio (V.)
Catts, James Howard ..	Cook (N.S.W.)	Livingston, John ..
Cameron, Donald Charles	Brisbane (Q.)	Barker (S.A.)
Chanter, Hon. John Moore	Riverina (N.S.W.)	Mackay, George Hugh ..
Chapman, Hon. Austin ..	Eden-Monaro	Lilley (Q.)
	(N.S.W.)	Mahon, Hon. Hugh ..
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1. Sworn 27th February, 1920.—2. Sworn 3rd March, 1920.—3. Appointed Temporary Chairman of Committees, 4th March, 1920.—4. Made affirmation 5th March, 1920.

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